

THE THEOLOGY OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST
IN THE SECOND CENTURY FATHERS

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INTRODUCTION

The term "second century Fathers" requires to be defined. On the one hand it is taken in this work to be more restrictive than the broader category, "early Christian Fathers," who could be said to extend at least from Clement of Rome to Athanasius, i.e. from the first to the fourth century A.D. On the other hand the term which we have used is more comprehensive than the category, "Apostolic Fathers," for it allows us to discuss the beginnings of Christian Apology in the Epistle to Diognetus and Justin Martyr, an example of an early Christian Homily in Melito of Sardis, and the dominant figure in the polemical literature of this period, Irenaeus.

It remains, however, to define how we have determined which writers may be said to belong to the second century. In brief it has been assumed that those writers belong to the second century whose major writings were composed within this period.

There are, however, some writers who clearly belong to the second century, but whose writings are not discussed in this dissertation for one reason or another. Aristo of Pella and Quadratus do not survive, except in isolated fragments preserved in Eusebius.¹ The work of Aristides was totally lost until recently,² but although this writer has a charming des-

¹On Aristo see Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica 3:5:3; on Quadratus H.E. 4:3:2. See also A. Harnack, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur (Leipzig: (n.d.)), Vol. I, p. 124.

²Eusebius, H.E. 4:3:2 mentions the Apology, but had not, it seems, read it. See J. A. Robinson and Rendal Harris (eds.), Texts and Studies (Cambridge: 1891), I:1, and Jules Lebreton and Jacques Zeiller, The History of the Primitive Church (London: 1942), Vol. II, p. 448.

cription of the moral power and purity of the Christian life, he has nothing to bring to our understanding of the passion of Christ. Athenagoras, followed shortly afterwards by Theophilus of Antioch, takes up again the defence of Christians on the ground of their moral earnestness and innocence, but neither has much to say on the matter which interests us; and though Athenagoras has a work On the Resurrection, he argues more as a philosopher on philosophical ground than as a Christian on the basis of the Gospel. It is more profitable to discuss the relationship between Christianity and philosophy in Justin Martyr, and so we pass these writers by.

On the other hand there is a number of writers whose period of writing extends into or begins in the second century, but whom we have not chosen to discuss, in part for the sake of brevity, but more because they belong in spirit, or at least in character, to the first or the third century.

Clement of Rome, for example, wrote towards the end of the first century, and obviously belongs to it. There is a much less clear case when we consider the Didache and the Epistle of Barnabas.³ There is no general agreement on the date of the Didache at present. But the connexion between the Didache and the Epistle of Barnabas is fairly well established. It seems clear that the Didache is dependent on the Epistle of Barnabas.⁴ But

³On the relationship between the two see F. C. Burkitt, "Barnabas and the Didache," Journal of Theological Studies, Vol. XXXIII (1932), p. 25-7; J. A. Robinson, "The Problem of the Didache," J.T.S., Vol. XIII (1912).

⁴R. H. Streeter, "The Much Belaboured Didache," J.T.S., Vol. XXXVII (1936) refers to an earlier article by Dom R. H. Connolly, "The Didache in relation to the Epistle of Barnabas," J.T.S., Vol. XXXIII (1932), and says, "Dom Connolly has made it impossible for any future scholar to reverse his hypothesis and argue that Barnabas used the Didache."

what date can we ascribe to the Epistle? In an unpublished dissertation⁵ Dr. James Muilenburg, following Harnack, argues that the Epistle is to be dated to 131 A.D., and the Didache to a period between this date and 250 A.D. Dr. A. Lukyn Williams,⁶ however, has given a much earlier date (somewhere before 100 A.D.) to the Epistle, and other scholars what seems to be an incredibly early date to the Didache. To say the least, the situation is somewhat confused! For the purposes of the present dissertation, however, we shall refer in passing to the Epistle of Barnabas without giving this work a separate chapter, and we shall not discuss the Didache at all.

At the end of the second century we have a further problem. Are we to include Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, and Tertullian? Clement died about 215 A.D., but his writing was mostly done, it seems, before 203 when he retired from Alexandria. Clement takes up the theme which Justin has developed of Jesus as the source of all true philosophy. In many ways he is a more interesting writer than Justin. But we have chosen to omit him from our discussion because his work is continued and fulfilled in his brilliant pupil, Origen, and in a sense can be best understood in relation to Origen.

For a similar reason we have chosen to omit any discussion of Hippolytus and Tertullian, though these two belong in any case more recognisably to the third century. Hippolytus seems to have been a commanding figure in the church at this time. A pupil of Irenaeus, Hippolytus stands

⁵Presented to Yale Divinity School, 1926.

⁶"The Date of the Epistle of Barnabas," J.T.S., Vol. XXXV (1934), p. 337.

between his master and Tertullian, but where Irenaeus had laid great emphasis on the incarnate humanity of Christ, Hippolytus interprets the doctrine of salvation, as it were, looking not just at the cradle but also and as much at the cross. Tertullian, on the other hand, conceives of Christianity as the "new law," and lays great stress on the forensic aspect of redemption. Tertullian, indeed, represents a turning point in theology, but the nature of this turn can be best understood when we examine him in relation to Hippolytus, and since to do this we should have to go well into the third century we have chosen to leave these two gigantic figures aside.

With the others whom we shall discuss we enter a fascinating era. The world mission of the Church had been extending for more than two generations, and by the beginning of the second century Christianity was coming into headlong conflict with Judaism, Gnosticism, and Hellenistic philosophy. Rudolph Bultmann has an illuminating comment in the Epilogue to his Theology of the New Testament:

Theology's continuity through the centuries consists not in holding fast to once formulated propositions but in the constant vitality with which faith, fed by its origin, understandingly masters its constantly new historical situation.⁷

For this reason it is of incalculable importance for us to study the writers of the second century, for in this period we see the Christian Gospel coming into conflict with, moulding, and in turn being informed and even modified by, the world of thought that it sought to claim for and bring to Christ.

⁷R. Bultmann, Theologie des Neuen Testaments, Eng. trans. Theology of the New Testament (London: 1955), by Kendrick Grobel, Vol. II, p. 237.

In the Shepherd of Hermas we shall see one aspect of this encounter with Judaism. Similarly, though Irenaeus wrote his major work "Against all Heresies," it is predominantly with Gnosticism that he had to deal, while Justin Martyr addressed the world of thought influenced by Greek philosophy. The confession of a particular belief is related always to the environment in which that belief is denied. What we find in Hermas, Irenaeus, and Justin, therefore, is their vindication of the Christian faith at the point where it was denied; and the extent of opposition to the Gospel in the second century helps us in turn not only to see the Gospel itself more clearly, but also to understand how it is to be brought to the world of thought which is still to be claimed for Christ.

In the Epistle to Diognetus we have a charming Apologia pro vita Christiana by an unknown writer. This document is typical of many in this century, but we shall be concerned not so much with its apology as with its Christology. The Homily on the Passion by Melito, Bishop of Sardis, has great value for us because, coming from an age of controversy, it is a sermon preached for the edification of a Christian congregation. It is important to us, further, for its typology, and in discussing this we shall consider not just its Passover typology but the wider question of typology in the second century. In Ignatius we come to a fascinating figure in a period of martyrdom. His Epistles are of very great value to us, for in Ignatius the passion of Christ is central. This centrality was not only theological, but existential, for Ignatius wrote to a Church that was under threat of martyrdom as one who knew that his own martyrdom was not far dis-

tant. The martyr Church saw in its Lord the Protomartyr.

In the writers of the second century whom we shall be discussing we have looked primarily for their interpretation of the death of Christ. It is not possible, however, to isolate this doctrine from the context in which it occurs, and therefore in each case we have discussed the theology of these writers, and then attempted to see how each interprets the passion. The views which we find are mixed; the theology is uneven. At times it is vigorous, vehement, personal, and moving. At other times it seems as though the passion of Christ, so central to the apostolic message, had been sacrificed to some lesser application or conception. We have tried to be constructive, fair, and positive, rather than negatively critical. It is never easy to preach the Gospel. In varying ways the writers of this century were men who knew the Apostle's cry, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel." Their writings show how far they have succeeded, and how far they have failed.

CHAPTER I

THE IDEA OF RANSOM AND THE PASSION OF CHRIST IN THE EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS

I. THE IDEA OF RANSOM IN THE BIBLE.

The Concept of Ransom in the Early Church.

For the writer of the Epistle to Diognetus the Gospel is to be defined supremely in terms of ransom through the passion of Christ:

God Himself in pity took our sin, Himself gave His own Son as ransom for us (αὐτὸς τὸν ἴδιον υἱὸν ἀπέδωκε λύτρον ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν), the Holy for the wicked, the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust, the incorruptible for the corruptible, the immortal for the mortal.¹

In this brief but important Epistle we find an interpretation of the passion of Christ which is at once thoroughly Biblical and of importance in moulding the theological interpretation of the cross in the following period of time. Christ's death is a λύτρον ; it is the "sweet exchange"² by which sinful and godless man has been made righteous through the Son of God. While it is true that explicit references to the nativity, miracles, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ are absent from this Epistle, and that therefore no explicit theory of the atonement is developed, we find, however, that it reveals an understanding of the redemption achieved in Christ and of the connexion between this redemption

¹Diog. 9:2.

²Diog. 9:5.

and the passion of Christ which is of considerable interest to us.

The author defines Christ's death as a ransom. This word occurs only once³ in the New Testament, and its compounds are rare, though the idea of redemption as ransom is woven into the thought and expressions of the New Testament writers. It occurs only once in this Epistle, but since, as we hope to show, this interpretation of Christ's death as a ransom is central to it, and since the idea of ransom is adopted and sometimes extended to grotesque points in subsequent theology, we shall first investigate the Biblical meaning of ransom, and then examine how these ideas are incorporated into the Epistle. The necessity for this procedure may become clearer when we understand that the main source of distortion in the theological interpretation of ransom in subsequent thought, though there are other contributing causes, was the assumption that ransom necessarily implies a recipient. To whom is the ransom paid, which Scripture avers the death of Christ to have been?

The idea of the death of Christ as a ransom paid to the devil emerged fairly early in Christian thought. It was never a strong element, however, and the protagonists of this view frequently contradicted it in their more characteristic writings. Origen is generally held to be the first proponent of such a view. He writes:

To whom was it (sc. the "ransom for many") paid? Certainly not to God; can it then be to the evil one? For he had power over us until the ransom was given to him on our behalf, namely, the life of Jesus;

³Mark 10. 45 and the parallel passage Matt. 20.28. The compound occurs only in I Tim. 2. 6.

and he was deceived thinking that he could keep His soul in his power; not seeing that he could not reach the standard required so as to be able to keep it in his power.⁴

Augustine at times speaks in similar terms, as for example when he describes the blood of Christ as the ransom price which was paid for us, and one of his more graphic metaphors is of Christ's body as the bait by which Satan was enticed and caught like a mouse in a trap.⁵

It is questionable, however, whether either of these interpretations is characteristic of its author. The metaphors seem to be little more than colourful exaggerations. Elsewhere in their writings Origen and Augustine are much closer to the line of thought which is developed in Irenaeus. Irenaeus dismissed the idea of Christ's death as a ransom paid to the devil on two grounds. First, the devil has no right or claim to man which he can exercise against God. When Adam was tempted, Irenaeus says, the devil lied. Lies are the weapon of the devil, as much in the wilderness when he tempted Jesus as in the Garden when he tempted Adam. His possession of man since the Fall is an act of plunder. In the second place, however, man himself is evil. The devil has not stolen a good possession from God, but an evil one - one which does not deserve to be ransomed.⁶

⁴Commentary on Matt. 16: 8. See E. Klostermann (ed.), Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (Leipzig and Berlin: 1897-).

⁵de Trinitate, 13: 9, Sermons, 263: 1

⁶A.h. V. xxiii. 1, V. xxi. 3.

When later theology misunderstood the death of Christ as a ransom, it was because it stressed the recipient of the ransom. In Irenaeus the emphasis is on the act of ransoming. It is as strange for him to think of paying a ransom to the devil as it would be to say that the man who joins battle to rescue his friend gives his life as a ransom to the enemy. Here, as elsewhere in Irenaeus, the stress is on the conflict, death, and resurrection of Christ as the victory by means of which the captive is delivered. The misinterpretation of the death of Christ as a ransom paid to the devil which developed in later theology is due in part to the fact that it thought of His death in juridical terms. Irenaeus is in the line of apostolic tradition when he lays the emphasis rather on the person and work of the Redeemer. Let us, therefore, examine in some detail the Biblical doctrine of redemption as ransom in order to establish a point of reference to which we shall frequently return, and then relate this doctrine to the Epistle which we are discussing.

The Biblical Concept of Ransom.

The dramatic and societary ideas of redemption in the Old Testament.

In the Septuagint (LXX) λύτρον is used to translate several related groups of Hebrew words which convey the sense of ransom either as a dramatic act or as a societary obligation.⁷

⁷The Hebrew words פדוּת and גא'ול which we shall mainly discuss here are transliterated as padhah and ga'al.

Ἀντρου itself is the Septuagint translation of mechir (the price of a captive),⁸ padhah (a ransom for life),⁹ ge'ullah (the price of the redemption of land),¹⁰ and padhah and ge'ullah as synonyms to mean the price of the redemption of a slave.¹¹

Ἀντροῦσθαι is used in the Septuagint to translate both ga'al and padhah which are frequently used as synonyms to mean to redeem that which has been alienated,¹² in particular Israel from its captivity in Egypt.¹³ Ἀντροῦσθαι is also used in the Septuagint to mean deliverance from external enemies,¹⁴ or from the power of sin,¹⁵ or from the power of death.¹⁶ The verb is also used in reference to the future deliverance of Israel of which we find a foreshadowing in the deliverance from Egypt.¹⁷ Ἀντρωσις is used in the Septuagint to translate ge'ullah (a redemption of a slave)¹⁸ and padhah (redemption, either of the firstborn,¹⁹ or of the people,²⁰ or

⁸Isa. 45:13.

⁹Exod. 21:30, 30:12; Num. 35:31f.; Prov. 13:8; cf. Prov. 6:35.

¹⁰Lev. 25:24. ¹¹Lev. 19:20, 25:51; Num. 3:46ff.; 18:15.

¹²Lev. 25:25ff., ga'al

¹³Exod. 6:6, 15:13, ga'al; Deut. 7:8, 9:26, 13:5, and II Sam. 7:23, padhah; also Ps. 76:16, ga'al, and Mic. 6:4, padhah.

¹⁴Ps. 106:2, ga'al. ¹⁵Ps. 129:8, ga'al, Dan. 4:24, padhah.

¹⁶Nos. 13:14, ga'al and padhah.

¹⁷Isa. 35:9, 41:14, 43:1,14, all ga'al. ¹⁸Lev. 25:48.

¹⁹Num. 18:16. ²⁰Ps. 110:8.

of the penitent.²¹ Αντρωπός is the Septuagint translation of go'el (kinsman).²²

Can we establish any real distinction of meaning between ga'al and padhah, which are frequently synonymous?

Padhah conveys the general sense of to ransom at a fixed price²³, to ransom the firstborn from death,²⁴ to ransom from violence or death,²⁵ from anything which endangers life,²⁶ of slaves from slavery.²⁷ It is used particularly of God's ransoming of Israel from exile²⁸ or Egypt.²⁹

Ga'al on the other hand carries the idea of to ransom on the grounds of societary allegiance, by acting the part of the kinsman (go'el). Ga'al thus means "to play the kinsman to a person," or, "to do the kinsman's part." It means to act as kinsman by taking a kinsman's widow. Thus Boaz says: "If he will do thee the kinsman's part (i.e. raise up children by the widow) well, let him do the kinsman's part; but if he is not pleased to do thee the kinsman's part, then I will do the kinsman's part).³⁰ It means to redeem a brother from serfdom into which he has been sold by poverty.³¹

²¹Ps. 129:7. ²²Ps. 18:15, 77:35 etc. ²³Exod. 13:13,15.

²⁴Ibid. ²⁵I Sam. 14:45. ²⁶Ps. 34:23. ²⁷Deut. 15:15.

²⁸Jer. 31:11. ²⁹Deut. 7:8, 13:6 etc. ³⁰Ruth 3:13.

³¹Lev. 25:47ff.; cf. Lev. 25:26 of a field which has been sold because an impoverished brother has sought to make money by its sale, and which has to be redeemed by the kinsman.

It means to avenge murder by shedding the murderer's blood.³² It is also used, however, of God's redemption of Israel from Egypt or from exile, because of God's personal relationship with His people.³³

The basic meaning of padhah is to set the prisoner free or deliver the captive from his captivity.³⁴ It is the word typically used in the Old Testament of God delivering His people from their captivity or exile by interposing His right hand to deliver them.³⁵ There is only one undebated occasion in the Old Testament on which the word padhah of sins.³⁶

The basic meaning of ga'al on the other hand is to do the part of the kinsman. When the word is used of God's redemption of Israel, what is implied is God's societary relation to Israel, which constitutes Him as Israel's Redeemer. The Redeemer redeems, because He stands in a certain relationship to the redeemed. The societary idea in ga'al appears clearly in the whole of Ps. 72. The king's rule over his people is based on his relationship with his people, and of his delivering the needy, pitying the poor. His redemption of their oppression is based on the covenant-

³²See Num. 35:19,21,24,25,27 etc.

³³Exod. 6:6, 15:13; Isa. 43:1, 44:22,23.

³⁴Padhah is a term of commercial law, handelsrechtlicher Terminus, and ga'al a term of civil-or family-law, familienrechtlicher Begriff. See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner (ed.), Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros (Leiden and Grand Rapids: 1951), s.v. padhah.

³⁵Deut. 9:26, 13:6, 21:8; Isa. 50:2; Jer. 31:11; Hos. 7:13f.; Mic. 6:4.

³⁶Ps. 130:8.

relationship of king and people. The Psalm is Messianic, and the king's rule is a type of God's rule over His people Israel.

It is this covenant-relationship between God and His people which is the basis of His deliverance of Israel from Egypt³⁷ and the Exile.³⁸ There is a profound development of this covenant-redemption in Deutero-Isaiah, where redemption is spoken of in the context of the Suffering Servant.³⁹ God, as Israel's go'el, intervenes for His people's redemption through His Servant: "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them (ge'alan)."⁴⁰

It is also in Deutero-Isaiah that ga'al is used in relation to redemption from sin. This idea, as we saw, was generally foreign to padhah. "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee (ge'altheyka)."⁴¹ The writer trembles on the verge of making the complete identification between God and His Servant, and it is only with the incarnation that this complete identification is made in Jesus Christ, the Word

³⁷Exod. 15:13. ³⁸Mic. 4:10.

³⁹Gf. Isa. 41:14 with 42:1; 43:1,14, 44:6,22-4, 47:4, 48:17,20, 49:7,26, 54:5,8, 60:16, and especially 63:9,16.

⁴⁰Isa. 63:9. ⁴¹Isa. 44:22.

made flesh, our go'el in the new Covenant, of whom it was said in prophecy in Deutero-Isaiah, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities."⁴² With this we should compare a passage in the New Testament, which reproduces, in the light of the incarnation, this Old Testament concept of the go'el Redeemer:

Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.⁴³

There are three important passages in which padhah and ga'al are used together almost as synonyms. These are:

(1) Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in days of old, the generations of ancient times. Art thou not it that cut Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon? Art thou not it which dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; that made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed (ge'ulim) to pass over? And the ransomed (pedhuyey) of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.⁴⁴

We find both ideas of ransom here. God is the covenant-God of Israel who redeems His people from bondage. His redemption is also the mighty act of the One whose strong arm will again ransom Israel. (ii) In Jeremiah we read: "For the Lord hath ransomed Jacob (padhah) and redeemed him (ge'alo) from the hand of him that was stronger than he."⁴⁵ God, who is Israel's go'el, gives proof of His kinship by redeeming His people. (iii) In Hosea

⁴²Isa. 53:5. ⁴³Heb. 2:14f. ⁴⁴Isa. 51:9-11.

⁴⁵Jer. 31:11.

God says: "I will ransom them ('epheden) from the power of the grave; I will redeem them ('ege'alen) from death."⁴⁶

The dramatic and societary ideas of redemption in the New Testament.

The word λύτρον is used in the New Testament in at least three distinct meanings, but at present we are concerned to discuss only those instances in which it is used to refer to the dramatic redemption of God, or to His redemption on the ground of societary connexion.

Λύτρον by itself is used only once.⁴⁷ The compound form ἀντίλυτρον is also used only once.⁴⁸

Λυτροῦσθαι is also rare, being found only in three passages:

(1) in Titus Jesus is described as the one "who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity (ἵνα λυτρώσται ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀνομίας), and purify (καθαρίσῃ) unto Himself a people for His own possession."⁴⁹ This is virtually the Septuagint rendering of Ps. 130:8, "And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities (καὶ αὐτὸς λυτρώσται τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτοῦ)."⁵⁰ The Hebrew text here uses a form of the verb padhah. This is the only undoubted instance in the Old

⁴⁶Hos. 13:4. Both words are used here of deliverance from Sheol.

⁴⁷Mark 10:45 and the parallel passage Matt. 20:28.

⁴⁸1 Tim. 2:6. ⁴⁹Titus 2:14.

⁵⁰On the use of ἀπὸ in Titus for the Septuagint ἐκ see J. H. Bernard, The Pastoral Epistles (Cambridge: 1899), p. 174.

Testament in which padhah is used in reference to sin. (ii) In Luke⁵¹ the verb λυτροῦσθαι is used absolutely. (iii) In I Peter we read: "Ye were redeemed, (ἐλυτρώθητε), not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ."⁵² The language is strongly reminiscent of the suffering Servant passages in Deutero-Isaiah.⁵³ The Isaianic language of redemption⁵⁴ was very early in Christian preaching applied to our Lord.⁵⁵ Deutero-Isaiah, as we said earlier, trembled on the verge of making the identification between God and the kinsman-Redeemer. Early Christian preaching declared that this identification was complete with the incarnation and passion of our Lord.

Λύτρωσις in the New Testament is also rare.⁵⁶ The compound ἀπολύτρωσις is much more commonly found.⁵⁷ In his explanation of Romans 3:24 Chrysostom distinguishes between the simple and compound nouns thus: "He did not simply say λύτρωσις, but ἀπολύτρωσις, so that we should no

⁵¹Luke 24:21. ⁵²I Pet. 1:18. ⁵³cf. Isa. 53:7.

⁵⁴E.g. Isa. 53:4, "He hath borne our griefs" - the Septuagint reads ἁμαρτίας, "sins"; cf. 53:5, "with His stripes we are healed."

⁵⁵E.g. Acts 8:32f. ⁵⁶Luke 1:68, 2:38, and Heb. 9:12.

⁵⁷Luke 21:28; Rom. 3:24, 8:23; I Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7 (cf. Col. 1:14) 4:30; Heb. 9:15, 11:35.

more come again into the same slavery."⁵⁸ The word λύτρον was characteristically used outside the New Testament in the first century to mean the purchase money for manumitting slaves. Deissmann says,

St. Paul, in expanding and adapting to the Greek world the Master's old saying about ransom, was admirably meeting the requirements and the intellectual capacity of the lower classes. For the poor saints of Corinth, among whom there were certainly some slaves, he could not have found a more popular illustration of the past and present work of the Lord.⁵⁹

From what we have already seen the act of deliverance is connected in parts of the New Testament with the price of that deliverance which is the death of Christ. Deissmann suggests that the combination of the ideas of manumission and sacrifice was made easier for the early Christians by the fact that sacral manumission (e.g. at Cos) was not complete without sacrifice.⁶⁰ It would, however, appear far more likely that the passages in Deutero-Isaiah in which the kinsman-Redeemer is closely linked with the Messiah, especially if these were embodied in an early compilation of "Testimonies" which has now disappeared, would provide the connecting link between the idea of redemption and the sacrifice of Christ in the New Testament.

58 καὶ οὐχ ἁπλῶς εἶπε λυτρώσεως, ἀλλ' ἀπολυτρώσεως, ὥς μὴ ἐτι ἡμᾶς ἐπανελθεῖν πάλιν ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν δουλείαν, Homily on Rom. 3:24. Cf. R. C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (eleventh edition; London: 1890), p. 273.

59 G. A. Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East (translated by L. R. M. Strachan; New York: 1927), p. 327; J. Wirtz, Die Lehre von der Apolytrosis; B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt and others (eds.), The Oxyrhynchus Papyri (London: 1898-1948), 48, 49, 722.

⁶⁰ Deissmann, ibid., p. 329.

Λυτρωτής is used only once in the New Testament.⁶¹

In his Commentary on Hebrews⁶² Westcott maintains that with the single exception of the synoptic narrative (Mark 10:45 = Matt. 20:28), the group of λύτρον and its compounds is found only in the Epistles of Paul and the writings which are coloured by his language (e.g. I Peter), and is absent altogether from the Johannine writings. He rightly goes on to add, however, that there is a more widespread use of the related idea of "purchasing at a price". Let us, therefore, now consider the use in the New Testament of the words ἀγοράζω and ἑξαγοράζω.

Ἀγοράζω is used in the New Testament of purchasing or buying in the market-place,⁶³ and metaphorically of redeeming.⁶⁴ ἑξαγοράζω, the intensive form, is used (in the middle) of purchasing for oneself⁶⁵ and (in the active) of redeeming or ransoming, particularly of slaves.⁶⁶

⁶¹Acts 7:35.

⁶²B. F. Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews (London: 1928), pp. 295ff.

⁶³Matt. 13: 44, 46, 21:12, 27:7; Mark 6:37, 11:15; Rev. 3:18.

⁶⁴I Cor. 6:20, 7:23; II Pet. 2:1; and especially Rev. 5:9 and 14:3, 4.

⁶⁵Eph. 5:16, "redeeming the time"; cf. Col. 4:5.

⁶⁶Gal. 3:13, cf. 4:5.

There appears to be a close connection between the use of ἀγοράζω and ἑξαγοράζω and the go'el type of λύτρον.⁶⁷ In Paul the emphasis is on the price of redemption (the death of Christ) which delivers men from their former bondage to another lord than Christ.⁶⁸ The passages from Revelation likewise stress the redemption by blood. The lamb stands before the throne "as having been slain". The four living creatures and the elders fall down and worship the lamb "for thou wast slain, and didst purchase (ἡγόρασας) to God with thy blood men of every tribe".⁶⁹ Later the seer learns of the other song which none could learn but "they that had been purchased (οἱ ἡγορασμένοι), from the earth," who it is also said were purchased (ἡγοράσθησαν), from men."⁷⁰

The cultic and forensic ideas of redemption in the Old Testament.

We have now analysed the two principal words padhah and ga'el which are translated in the Septuagint by λύτρον. There is, however, a third Hebrew word for which λύτρον is used, קָפָר, and to this we now turn.⁷¹

⁶⁷See F. J. A. Hort (ed.), The First Epistle of St. Peter (London: 1898), pp. 78ff.

⁶⁸I Cor. 6:20. ⁶⁹Rev. 5:9.

⁷⁰Rev. 14:1-5. The emphasis on the blood of the lamb as the price of redemption is repeated in Rev. 1:5.

⁷¹This will be transliterated as kaphar.

The usual translation of kaphar in the Septuagint is ἱλάσσομαι or the compound ἐξιλάσσομαι. Other translations are: ἄθωώ, usually in the sense of to hold guiltless;⁷² ἀφαιρέω, to take away;⁷³ ἀφιήμι, in the passive, to be purged, in the sense of to be put away;⁷⁴ ἀφαιρέω, to take away;⁷⁵ ἀποκαθαίρω, to clean, purge;⁷⁶ ἀγιάζω, in the passive, to be hallowed, dedicated.⁷⁷ In six passages⁷⁸ λύτρον translates the Hebrew לִּטְרוֹן, and מִן־הַלִּטְרוֹן is translated as ἱλαστήριον, the mercy-seat was sprinkled once a year by the blood poured upon it by the High Priest.⁷⁹

The fundamental idea of kaphar is that of covering, hiding, etc.⁸⁰ Thus the gal form is used of covering or smearing a ship with tar.⁸¹ In the later use of the word this original sense was lost. The usual trans-

⁷²Jer. 18:23.

⁷³Isa. 6:7, of iniquity, which is connected with περικαθαρίζω, to purge, a translation of לְבַשׁ אֲשָׁמָה.

⁷⁴Isa. 22:14.

⁷⁵Isa. 27:9, with the sense of purging as a translation of לְבַשׁ אֲשָׁמָה.

⁷⁶Prov. 16:6. ⁷⁷Used as a paraphrase in Exod. 29:33.

⁷⁸E.g. Prov. 6:35. ⁷⁹E.g. Exod. 25:17.

⁸⁰See Koehler-Baumgartner, s.v. לָפַח; C. R. Smith, The Biblical Doctrine of Salvation (London: 1946), pp. 96ff.; R. B. Girdlestone, Synonyms of the Old Testament (London: 1871), pp. 127ff.; S. R. Driver, "Propitiation," Dictionary of the Bible (edited by James Hastings; New York: 1909), Vol. IV, pp. 128ff.

⁸¹Gen. 6:14.

lation of the Hebrew word in English is "to atone for," though, as we shall see, this is hardly accurate. The original idea of covering does, however, emerge again in one or two passages, where it is presumably suggested that the guilty or offending person covered God's face by his act of expiation, or covered his sin.

Thus in the piel form we find the word used of making amends for, making amends with, covering over, or pacifying;⁸² of covering or averting mischief;⁸³ of covering one's own or another's sins;⁸⁴ of covering or atoning for sins ritually, or by legal rites.⁸⁵ The general idea in the piel form of the verb is that the persons who make the offering are covered by what is pleasing to God: "(The priest shall) make an atonement for you,

⁸²Gen. 32:20. "I will appease him with the present," i.e. "I will cover his face with a present, so that he does not see the offence"; Exod. 32:30, in reference to sin; cf. Prov. 16:14, II Sam. 21:3.

⁸³Isa. 47:11; Dan. 9:24.

⁸⁴II Sam. 21:3; Deut. 21:8; Ezek. 16:63, 45:15,17, and especially Jer. 18:23 where the idea is of God covering His people's sins, so as to avert punishment from them.

⁸⁵Ezek. 43:20,26 of the ritual purification of the altar, Ezek. 45:20, of the ritual cleansing of the dwellers in the house by the blood of the sin offering; and especially Lev. 17:11 of making atonement by blood by reason of the soul which is in the blood, "for the life of the flesh is the blood" (ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ πάσης σαρκὸς αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐστὶ); Exod. 30:15,16, of the payment of atonement money, Lev. 4: 20,31, of making atonement by the ritual ministry of the priest through the blood of the sin offering.

to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins, before the Lord"

(ἐξιλάσεται περὶ ὑμῶν, καθαρῖσαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ πασῶν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἔναντι κυρίου, καὶ καθαρισθήσεσθε).⁸⁶

In the pual form the word is used of being made exempt from punishment, of being atoned, e.g.: "Thy sin shall be covered over" (by the live coal from the altar).⁸⁷ There is an interesting summary of the use of the word in Koehler-Baumgartner's Lexicon:

The Hebrew, considered for itself, leads to cover as its original meaning... The aim of כָּפַר, כִּפְּרָה, etc., always is to avert evil, especially punishment. Human beings accomplish this aim by expedients (gift, offering, act of atonement). Where God is the subject of כָּפַר, expedients are lacking. God covers guilt out of free grace, but His acting thus is less the pardon of a father than the releasing by a judge.⁸⁸

The cultic and forensic idea of redemption. We have seen that in general the word kaphar is used in the sense of covering. We must be careful, however, to interpret correctly what the Hebrew writers meant by saying that God "covered" iniquity. To cover in the sense that we are discussing means to disannul, to treat as non-existent. Hence, though there has been a difference of opinion among scholars as to the meaning of the original metaphor of kipper⁸⁹ the general sense of the word is

⁸⁶Lev. 16:30.

⁸⁷Isa. 6:7, cf. Isa. 22:14, 27:9; Prov. 16:6; Exod. 29:33.

⁸⁸Koehler-Baumgartner, Lexicon, p. 452.

⁸⁹The original metaphor may have been to cover (Ps. 32:1, 85:2; Neh. 3:37) or to wipe out (Isa. 43:25, 44:22; Jer. 18:23; Ps. 51:1, 9, 109:14).

in relation to the offended person to reconcile or propitiate, and in relation to the offender or the offence, to hide or to screen.

Thus in relation to the offended person kaphar means to conciliate. Similarly the noun כִּפָּר, has something of the sense of "hush-money," i.e. money paid to avoid punishment, a propitiatory gift offered to satisfy the avenger of blood, and so the satisfaction for a life, "ransom."⁹⁰ In relation to the offender or the offence the subject is usually God who "covers" iniquity, i.e. disannuls it, treats it as non-existent, puts it behind His back, overlooks, pardons, or forgives it. In this case God's covering is unmotivated and originates in His own free grace.

There is thus implied in the use of kipper the idea of a forensic or cultic transaction by which sin, whether ceremonial sin or the sins of the covenant-people, Israel, are annulled, treated as non-existent, or obliterated. The difficulty of finding a suitable word to translate the sense is evident in the Authorised Version where it is rendered by appease, make atonement for, pacify, avert, make reconciliation for, forgive, purge away, cleanse, purify, etc., while the noun כִּפָּר is regularly translated by ransom.⁹¹

⁹⁰Exod. 21:30, 30:12; Num. 35:31f.; Ps. 49:8; Prov. 13:8, 21:18; Job 33:24, 36:18.

⁹¹Exod. 30:12; Job 33:24, 36:18; Ps. 49:7; Prov. 6:35, 13:8, 21:18; Isa. 43:3, etc.

We have already quoted the use of רָזַק as "hush-money," money used to propitiate or satisfy the wrath of the offended party or the avenger of blood. In this sense the word is usually translated as ransom. The word may also be used of a ransom to avoid anything unpleasant.⁹²

The idea of a ransom paid not simply by money but by human life is seen, for example, in II Samuel where the lives of the seven sons of Saul are the ransom-price for Saul's murder of the Gibeonites: "Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us and we will hang them up."⁹³ The necessity of ransoming by blood is seen again in two important passages, in Numbers where it is said: "No expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it," and Deuteronomy where the corporate responsibility of the community for the crime committed in its midst is admitted, and appeal made to the Lord that the expiation (the breaking of the heifer's neck) may be accepted as a symbol of the desire of the people that God may exterminate the pollution of the innocent blood from their midst.⁹⁴ There is also a large number of references where the ideas of ransom and blood are cultically related.⁹⁵

⁹²Exod. 30:12, of a plague; Isa. 43:3, where Egypt is the ransom Jahveh gives to Cyrus in place of Israel, etc.

⁹³II Sam. 21:3. ⁹⁴Num. 35:33; Deut. 21:28.

⁹⁵In Lev. 6:30, 8:15, 16:27 and 14:53, the blood (which contains the soul, or life, cf. Lev. 17:11) makes propitiation or atonement, and even makes clean (Lev. 14:53, "and it shall be clean," sc. from the pollution of the leprosy; cf. also Ezek. 43:20).

The cultic and forensic ideas of redemption in the New Testament.

We can now turn to examine the cultic and forensic ideas of redemption as they appear in the New Testament.

The word ἐξιλάσκομαι is not found in the New Testament, though the simple form ἱλάσκομαι does, in the sense of to be propitious or merciful.⁹⁶ The simple verb has also the sense of the compound, to expiate, or to make propitiation for.⁹⁷ This latter usage of the verb with the accusative of the thing for which atonement is made is unusual, though we may compare the Wisdom of Sirach: "Whoso honoureth his father maketh an atonement for his sins" (ὁ τιμῶν πατέρα ἐξιλάσεται ἁμαρτίας).⁹⁸

The noun ἱλασμός occurs twice in the Johannine Epistles in the sense of a means of appeasing, or a propitiation.⁹⁹

The adjective ἱλαστήριος in the sense of propitiatory occurs only once: "Christ Jesus . . . whom God set forth to be a propitiation (ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον), through faith, by His blood, to shew His righteousness, because of the passing over of sins done aforetime."¹⁰⁰ The substantive ἱλαστήριον (sc. ἐπίθεμα), mercy-seat is also found

⁹⁶Luke 18:13. "God be merciful to me a sinner" (ἱλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ).

⁹⁷Heb. 2:17, "to make propitiation for the sins of the people (εἰς τὸ ἱλάσσεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ).

⁹⁸For a pagan inscription see J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (London: 1914-29), PT. IV, p. 303.

⁹⁹I John 2:2, 4:10. ¹⁰⁰Rom. 3:25

only once.¹⁰¹ Some commentators, however, understand ἱλαστήριον in Romans to be used in the same sense as that in which it is used in Hebrews to mean that Christ is our "place of propitiation."¹⁰² Others interpret it on the analogy of αὐτήριον or χαριστήριον (sc. θύμα) with reference to votive-offerings. The exact interpretation is therefore obscure, but we can note at least this, first, that throughout the New Testament ἱλάσσομαι is invariably used in connexion with sin, and second, that the idea of blood is frequently used in connexion with propitiation.¹⁰³

The writers of the New Testament see the blood of Jesus, a symbolic way of describing His death, as being the cost or price of His redemption.¹⁰⁴ It is by the passion of Christ that men are propitiated. Nowhere in the New Testament is this cultic transaction more clearly stressed than in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Here the ideas of the death or blood of Christ and of propitiation are closely linked in terms of the obedience

¹⁰¹Heb. 9:5.

¹⁰²See Moulton and Milligan, ibid.; W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (fifth edition; Edinburgh: 1950), pp. 87ff.

¹⁰³See Rom. 3:25, I John 1:7, 2:2, and especially I Pet. 1:2, "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus," where the phrase ραντισμόν αἵματος suggests the frequent and pregnant usage of ραντίζειν and ραντισμός in Hebrews (9:13, 19, 21, 10:22, 12:24) where the reference is probably to several passages in the Old Testament in which the sprinkling of blood is mentioned, and possibly too to the Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah (e.g. Isa. 52:15, "so shall he sprinkle many nations").

¹⁰⁴E.g. Rev. 1:5, 5:9; Acts 20:28; Col. 1:20, etc.

of Christ in our humanity.¹⁰⁵ It is (to use the words of P. T. Forsyth) Christ's "exhaustive obedience and surrender of His total self" that is demonstrated in the Epistle. The work of Christ is the purification of our sins,¹⁰⁶ and He has achieved this purification as the merciful High Priest, who, having sacrificed Himself,¹⁰⁷ has made propitiation for the sins of the people. He has Himself gone into the holiest place of all with His own blood, and has obtained eternal redemption.¹⁰⁸ The blood of Christ will purge our conscience from dead works.¹⁰⁹ His death is thus integrally related to sin, and the propitiation which He makes is that of the High Priest who, in obedience to the will of God, lays down His life in the sacrifice for sin. Sinful men have no access to God because of their sin, but Christ as Priest makes propitiation for sinful men through the sacrifice of Himself, and apart from the shedding of blood there is no

¹⁰⁵E.g. Heb. 10:1-10. See P. T. Forsyth, The Cruciality of the Cross (London: 1909), p. 182: "(God's) self-complete holiness requires, to meet and satisfy it, a totally holy self, in a real act or deed of gift, once for all, the absorption and oblation of the whole self in a crucial and objective achievement." Cf. also James Denney, The Death of Christ (New York: 1902), pp. 204ff.

¹⁰⁶Heb. 1:3, "when He had made purification of sins" (καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος).

¹⁰⁷Heb. 9:26, "Now hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (εἰς ἀθέτησιν τῆς ἁμαρτίας διὰ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ).

¹⁰⁸Heb. 9:12, αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν εὐράμενος.

¹⁰⁹Heb. 9:14, τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ... καθαριεῖ τὴν συνείδησιν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων.

remission of sins. ¹¹⁰

One of the most frequent words in Hebrews is ἁγιάζω , which describes the work of the High Priest in giving His life.¹¹¹ The Epistle likewise links together the ideas of propitiation and the blood of Jesus. The death of Christ is the act by which sin is covered and annulled.

II. THE IDEA OF RANSOM AND THE PASSION OF CHRIST IN THE EPISTLE.

We have now studied the Biblical concept of ransom in some detail, for we shall frequently return in this dissertation to the ideas of redemption as the mighty act of God (the padhah type), as the act of the kinsman-Redeemer (the ga'al type), and as the act of annulling or covering sin (the kipper type). We are now, therefore, in a position to examine the Epistle to Diognetus and relate our findings so far to its doctrine of the passion of Christ.

Redemption as the Mighty Act of God.

"God Himself gave His only Son." This for the writer of the Epistle is the sum and substance of the Gospel. Our redemption is a mighty act of God, who, having purposed in the beginning to save mankind, gave up His own

¹¹⁰Cf. Heb. 9:22, χωρὶς αἵματις υἱοῦ οὐ γίνεται ἄφεσις .

¹¹¹Heb. 2:11, 10:10, 10:14, and especially 13:12.

Son as a ransom for them. We have seen how in the Biblical concept of ransom we have three distinct types. At present we shall try to see how the padhah type of redemption, the idea of redemption through the mighty act of God, is interpreted in the Epistle to Diognetus.

The divine initiative. The writer of the Epistle sees the incarnation and the atonement (as the ultimate purpose of the incarnation) as originating in the goodness of the Eternal Father who communicated this "great and unutterable design" to His Child alone.¹¹² God's taking of the initiative is to be explained by His love and grace. God is the Lord and Maker of all things, ὁ παντοκράτωρ καὶ παντοκτίστης καὶ ἀόρατος θεός, ὁ δεσπότης καὶ δημιουργός καὶ ὅλων θεός,¹¹³ yet He is not the δημιουργός of the Gnostics, for in the beginning He first loved man and purposed to save him. God is ὁ προαγαπήσας, the One who has taken the initiative in loving man. He is φιλόανθρωπος, μακρόθυμος.¹¹⁴ He has borne with us, in order that we may be counted worthy of His goodness (ἀνεχόμενος... ἵνα ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ χρηστότητος ἀχιωθῶμεν).¹¹⁵ He did not hate us, but made it His concern to do away with our sins (αὐτὸς τὰς ἡμετέρας ἁμαρτίας

¹¹²Diog. 8:8. ¹¹³Diog. 7:2, 8:7, cf. 3:2, 3:4, 8:4.

¹¹⁴Diog. 8:7, cf. 8:8. ¹¹⁵Diog. 9:1

ἀνεδέξατο).¹¹⁶ Indeed, the majesty (μεγαλειότης), of God is to be defined as a majesty of love,¹¹⁷ for it was for love of men that God made the world (ὁ γὰρ θεὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἡγάπησε, δι' οὓς ἐποίησε τὸν κόσμον), and for love of men that He sent His Son to redeem the world.¹¹⁸ In this purpose of love the Son, through whom He made the world, fully shared.¹¹⁹

The sending of the Son. The God whom the writer of this Epistle knows is the God who in sheer love has made man and sent His Son to redeem him. This mission of the Son was made necessary by the plight in which man lay bound:

But when our iniquity was fulfilled and it had become fully manifest that its reward of punishment and death waited for it . . . (He) gave His own Son as ransom for us.¹²⁰

Before the coming of the Son men were borne along by unruly impulses

¹¹⁶Diog. 9:2. There is no suggestion of patripassionism here. The word ἀναδέχομαι is used only twice in the New Testament, of Abraham receiving the promises (Heb. 11:17) and of receiving guests (Acts 28:7). But Moulton and Milligan, Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, show that the word was not uncommonly used in the legal sense of taking responsibility for, and quote a papyrus of a date perhaps slightly later than the Epistle: ἐὰν τις ζητή(σιν) περὶ τούτου γένηται πρὸς αὐτὸν... (ἐγὼ) αὐτὸς τοῦτο ἀναδέχομαι, "I will take the responsibility upon myself," The Oxyrhyncus Papyrus, 3, 513, 57ff. (184 A. D.).

¹¹⁷Diog. 10:5, cf. 9:2, where God's δύναμις is defined in terms of μακροθυμία and not of βία, for βία is no attribute of God, 7:4.

¹¹⁸Diog. 10:2

¹¹⁹Diog. 7:2, 8:9, and cf. R. C. Moberly, Atonement and Personality (London: 1901), p. 331: "The entire conception and process of redemption is, from first to last, a revelation of unimaginable love; . . . and this love is . . . not less emphatically the love of the Father, than the love of the Son who died."

¹²⁰Diog. 9:2.

as the victims of pleasures and lusts. By his own consent, therefore, man is a sinful creature.¹²¹ The writer of the Epistle interprets sin in part also as ignorance: "What man knew what God is, before He came?"¹²² But he does not hold the view of other writers of the second century that sin is attributable to the demons, and that therefore redemption is to be understood as deliverance from their power. The plight in which man is found is sin, and because of sin, the inability to attain to holiness. For the writer of the Epistle, therefore, the crucial problem is how man is to be delivered from the death which, by his sin, he deserves. The profound connexion made by Paul between sin and death, and developed by Irenaeus, is to be found also here.¹²³ To save man in his plight God sends His Son.

Again the emphasis is upon the goodness and mercy of God, for He did not send His Son to tyrannize, or to inspire terror and awe, but sent Him in gentleness, meekness, and royal condescension:

Yes, but did He send Him, as a man might suppose, in sovereignty and fear and terror? Not so, but in gentleness and meekness, as a king sending a son, He sent Him as King, He sent Him as God, He sent Him as man to men, He was saving and persuading when He sent Him, not compelling, for compulsion is not an attribute of God.¹²⁴

At the opportune time, when man was in bondage, ignorance, and death, God

¹²¹Diog. 9:1. ¹²²Diog. 8:1, 10:3.

¹²³Cf. Moberly, Atonement and Personality, p. 330: "It is not how to deliver man from being treated as he deserves, but how to deliver him out of the deserving of death (a deserving from which death is inseparable); it is this which is the apparently insoluble problem.

¹²⁴Diog. 7:3-4.

sent His Son as a sign of His yearning to save men, and as a manifestation of His love to those who were unable to save themselves.¹²⁵

The Redeemer as the Bringer of γνῶσις. As we have seen the writer of this Epistle interprets sin from one aspect as the ignorance of God. "Before He came what man had any knowledge at all of what God is?" (τίς γὰρ ὅλως ἀνθρώπων ᾔπιστατο, τί ποτ' ἔστι θεός).¹²⁶ No man has seen God or known Him,¹²⁷ and His design has been a mystery.¹²⁸ The redemption which is brought to men by the Son may therefore in one aspect be defined as the knowledge of God which is now revealed to us. In sending His Son to men God has established among them "the truth and the holy and incomprehensible word."¹²⁹ In the Son God has manifested Himself, and it is possible through faith to see God, θεὸν ἰδεῖν.¹³⁰ God has revealed His counsel through His beloved child, and has allowed men to share in His blessings and see and understand them, (ἰδεῖν καὶ νοῆσαι).¹³¹ The season has come which God has appointed to manifest His goodness and power (φανερῶσαι τὴν χρηστότητα καὶ δύναμιν),¹³² and therefore redemption may be called "knowledge of the Father," (ἐπίγνωσις πατρός),¹³³ which is a knowledge that fills us with joy, for part of this knowledge is to know what is the true life in heaven.¹³⁴

¹²⁵Diog. 7:3, 8:11, 9:1,2,5,7. ¹²⁶Diog. 8:1. ¹²⁷Diog. 8:5.

¹²⁸Diog. 8:10. ¹²⁹Diog. 7:2. ¹³⁰Diog. 8:5,6. ¹³¹Diog. 8:11.

¹³²Diog. 9:2, and cf. φῶς 9:6. ¹³³Diog. 10:1. ¹³⁴Diog. 10:7.

The interpretation of Jesus Christ as the One who brings saving illumination to men is a common one in the writings of this period and earlier. Thus I Clement writes: "Through (Jesus Christ the Creator of the Universe) called us from darkness to light, from ignorance to the full knowledge of the glory of His name."¹³⁵ In similar terms the writer of the Epistle to Barnabas conceives the ministry of Christ.

For He was prepared for this purpose, that when He appeared He might redeem from darkness our hearts which were already paid over to death, and given over to the iniquity of error.¹³⁶

The idea of ransoming from darkness appears again in the interpretation of baptism in this period. Baptism, conveying liturgically the benefits of Christ's passion, is the saving illumination by which the person baptized is brought out of his ignorance and sin into life. Thus Clement of Alexandria writes: "Being baptized, we are illuminated (βαπτιζόμενοι φωτιζόμεθα), This work has many names: gift of grace, enlightenment, perfection, washing."¹³⁷ Indeed "illumination" (φώτισμα), is Clement's favourite synonym for baptism.¹³⁸

¹³⁵I Clem. 59:2. ¹³⁶Ep. of Barn. 14:5.

¹³⁷Clement of Alexandria, Paedagogue, 1:6.

¹³⁸See J. Patrick, Clement of Alexandria (Edinburgh and London: 1914), p. 125; R. B. Tollinton, Clement of Alexandria, Vol. II, pp. 145ff.: "To receive baptism is to receive illumination, because the sacrament marked the transition from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light." The soul is washed in baptism. Cf. also the reference in Clement to baptism as φώτισμα, Tollinton, l.c.

Redemption as Man's Deliverance from Death.

We have spent some time in examining the idea of redemption in the Epistle to Diognetus as the mighty act of God. This is what has been referred to as the padhah type of redemption, and we have examined it from the aspect of the divine initiative, the mission of the Son, and redemption as the bringing of knowledge of God. In the padhah type of redemption the stress is on the act of redemption. We now turn to consider the second and related idea of redemption, that of ransom as the act of the go'el or kinsman, and in this the stress is on the nature or person of the Redeemer. As our go'el, the kinsman-Redeemer, Christ not only identifies Himself with our humanity, but also, in virtue of what He is, delivers us from our frailty and bondage. He redeems us from within our human nature.

The incarnation of the Son. The interest of the writer of the Epistle in the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ is slight, but we nevertheless find a strongly anti-docetic emphasis on the fact that the Son assumed human flesh: "In gentleness and meekness, as a king sending a son, He sent Him as King, He sent Him as God, He sent Him as man to men."¹³⁹ "He sent the Word to appear to the world, who was dishonoured by the chosen people, was preached by apostles, was believed by

¹³⁹Diog. 7:4, reading $\omega\varsigma$ $\alpha\upsilon\theta\eta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\tau\omicron\nu$ with Lachmann and Bunsen.

the heathen."¹⁴⁰ God has now shown His Son to men as being able to save.¹⁴¹

The Son who has been sent to men is Himself God and Lord, "the very artificer and Creator of the universe," and not merely some minister or angel.¹⁴² The purpose of His coming is plain: it is to reveal Himself - "He Himself manifested Himself" (αὐτὸς δὲ ἑαυτὸν ἐπέδειξεν)¹⁴³ and thereby to reveal the truth.

The writer of this Epistle speaks unmistakeably about the incarnation of the Son, and therefore about the incarnation or go'el aspect of redemption. It is the flesh of sinful men that the Son has taken upon Himself.¹⁴⁴ The σάρξ of men is their mortal and frail humanity when seen in comparison with the majesty of the Creator. To say that the Son was incarnate is thus to say that the Son was in our flesh, in our humanity. This is the gracious condescension of the Son who, in taking our humanity, that is, in revealing Himself as our kinsman, our go'el, delivers us from the bondage in which our humanity is held captive. It is characteristic of the theology of the second century to dwell on the humiliation and death of Christ, unlike the Docetists who denied that the Christ can suffer. Where Deutero-Isaiah was unwilling to go so far as to identify the Suffering Servant with the Redeemer of the chosen people, the Fathers of the second

¹⁴¹Diog. 11:3. ¹⁴²Diog. 9:6. ¹⁴³Diog. 7:2,4,7, 8:7, 12:9.

¹⁴⁴On the use of σάρξ in the Epistle see 4:4, 5:8, 6:5,6.

century exult in the passion of Christ. This passion in our humanity and for us is the act of the Redeemer, the Son who is both Kinsman, Redeemer, and Sufferer. He is both divine Word and incarnate Son. And our humanity is the area of this work of atonement. Our weak and sinful humanity, borne about by unruly impulses and subject to death, is the $\sigma\acute{o}\phi\epsilon$ in which the Logos has become incarnate. It is in our flesh that the Kinsman suffers to redeem us.¹⁴⁵

Our Deliverance from death through the Son. We now begin to see how the writer of the Epistle understands the redemption which has been achieved by Christ as deliverance from death, release from that which holds man captive. Our redemption from death is achieved for us by the One who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. The cost of this redemption is the cross. As the Servant described in Deutero-Isaiah was stricken, smitten, afflicted, wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, so the kinsman-Redeemer suffers and dies for the sin of mankind. He has been dishonoured ($\alpha\tau\mu\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$),¹⁴⁶ but by His substitutionary death He has borne our punishment and death: "O the sweet exchange, O the inscrutable creation, O the unexpected benefits, that the wickedness of many should be concealed in one righteous, and the right-

¹⁴⁵Cf. L. B. Radford, The Epistle to Diognetus (London: 1908), p. 39.

¹⁴⁶Diog. 11:9

eousness of the one should make righteous many wicked!"¹⁴⁷ God has sent His Son as a ransom for us, and in ransoming us the Son has given His life: "(He) Himself gave His own Son as ransom for us, the Holy for the wicked, the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust, the incorruptible for the corruptible, the immortal for the mortal."¹⁴⁸ In former times our nature was powerless to gain life, but now the Saviour has been revealed in His power to save even powerless creatures. The Saviour who has come into our humanity has given us life (ζωήν), where it was least expected, because death reigned in the world, and those to whom the Son has come have been promised the life of the kingdom in heaven.¹⁴⁹ Jesus Christ, in delivering us from this bondage, has given men the capacity to see that God lives and reigns, and therefore that "the apparent death of this world" can now be despised.¹⁵⁰

Closely connected with this aspect of redemption is the idea of the putting on of the new being. The Apostle Paul may be said to have established the basis for this in his expression: "We were buried therefore

¹⁴⁷Diog. 9:5, cf. 9:2.

¹⁴⁸Diog. 9:2. On the use of ὑπέρ rather than ἀντί in the phrase λυτρον ὑπέρ ἡμῶν see V. Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (London: 1937), p. 102; J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: 1929), Vol. II, p. 236. Ὑπέρ can frequently be found in a substitutionary sense in classical Greek, e.g. Plato, *Gorgias*, 515C, Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 7.4.9, and in several inscriptions, e.g. P. Tebt. 1.6.49 (140-39 B.C.), P. Tebt. 1.104.39 (32 B. C.).

¹⁴⁹Diog. 9:6, 10:2. ¹⁵⁰Diog. 10:7.

with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς).¹⁵¹ Ignatius appears to have had this passage in mind when he writes:

God was displayed in human form to bring "newness of eternal life" (εἰς καινότητα αἰδίου ζωῆς). Then what has been completed in the purpose of God began to be enacted: hence the whole universe was stirred, because the destruction of death was being undertaken (διὰ τὸ μελετᾶσθαι θανάτου κατάλυσιν).¹⁵²

There are frequent references in the writings of this period to the "new being" which comes about through the redemption of Christ. Thus Irenaeus writes:

He who was to destroy sin and redeem man from guilt had to enter into the very condition of man, who had been dragged into slavery and was held by death, in order that death might be slain by man, and man should go forth from the bondage of death. For as through the disobedience of one man, who was the first man, fashioned out of virgin soil, many were made sinners; so it was necessary that through the obedience of one man, who was the first to be born of a virgin, many should be justified and receive salvation.¹⁵³

Irenaeus taught that the first man, Adam, was made in the image of God, but was not the perfect image. There was no man truly the image of God until the Son became incarnate, and it is only in Christ that men become truly the image of God. Hence Irenaeus asserts that there exists a distinction between Adam before the Fall and Christ. The humanity of the unfallen Adam is inferior to the humanity of Christ. At the incarnation there emerges a new being.¹⁵⁴ In a similar manner the writer of the Epistle of Barnabas

¹⁵¹Rom. 6:4. ¹⁵²Eph. 19:3. ¹⁵³A.h. III.xvii.6ff.

¹⁵⁴See especially A.h. IV.lxxvi, lxxvii, and cf. V.xvi.

speaks of the first Adam as having been formed of the virgin soil which had not yet been violated by human cultivation, and of the second Adam who was formed of the Virgin Mother, and so emphasises that the Lord differed in His humanity from mankind as widely as Adam before the Fall differed from his posterity afterwards.¹⁵⁵ This writer refers to the incarnation as a "second creation" (δευτέρα πλάσις). When man is redeemed through the forgiveness of his sins, he becomes a new creation: "Since then He made us new by the remission of sins, He made us another type, that we should have the soul of children, as though He were creating us afresh" (ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς ἄλλον τύπον , ὡς παιδίων ἔχειν τὴν ψυχὴν , ὡς ἂν δὴ ἀναπλάσσειντος ἡμᾶς).¹⁵⁶

The writer of the Epistle to Diognetus similarly maintains that those who are redeemed by Christ partake of this new being and become "another type" through their imitatio Christi. But their imitation of Christ is not interpreted moralistically but ontologically. There is an ontological relationship between Christ's passion and man's redemption, and the imitation of Christ is therefore not to be understood in a moralistic or mystic sense, but in the sense of the relationship which exists between Jesus Christ the kinsman-Redeemer and those whom He has redeemed. As Christ, our go'el, has redeemed us because He is our kinsman, so through our kinship with the Son of God we participate in His benefits

¹⁵⁵Ep. of Barn. 6:12ff. ¹⁵⁶Ep. of Barn. 6:11.

as well as in His passion. This aspect of redemption is seen clearly in a passage such as the following:

For God loved mankind for whose sake He made the world, to whom He subjected all things which are in the earth, to whom He gave reason, to whom He gave mind, on whom alone He enjoined that they should look upward to Him, whom He made in His own image, to whom He sent His only-begotten Son, to whom He promised the kingdom in heaven - and He will give it to them who loved Him.¹⁵⁷

We may take this passage as the fullest interpretation in the writer of the idea of kinship implicit in the ga'al type of redemption. It is unfortunate that some modern commentators, in discussing the meaning of the imitatio Christi, have failed to see the significance of this important passage which prefaces the imitatio passage. Thus, for example, H. G. Meecham writes:

In the Son God has manifested His love for men. This love begets a corresponding love towards God and this in turn leads to the imitatio Dei. Then love shown by man to men naturally follows.¹⁵⁸

While it is true that the idea of the imitatio Dei was widespread in contemporary popular religious thought, this has nothing in common with the idea of imitatio Christi which we find in the Epistle.

It is a characteristic of this document that the writer, following the New Testament, defines the ἀγάπη of God in terms of His giving or sending His Son to die for men's sins. Thus he writes: "When He sent Him He was loving, not judging."¹⁵⁹ The love of God is expressed in the

¹⁵⁷Diog. 10:1,2.

¹⁵⁸H. G. Meecham, The Epistle to Diognetus (London: 1949), p. 22.

¹⁵⁹Diog. 7:5.

mission of the Son. The matter which concerned the writer was not the simple moral consequence that man should therefore in his dealings with his fellow-men imitate the love of God which he saw in the incarnation: it was rather the more complex question of the relationship between the incarnation, passion, and death of Christ on the one hand and man's redemption on the other. It is in the light of this question and the answer which the writer tries to give that we are to examine the question which he asks: "How will you love Him who so first loved you?" The answer which he gives is: "loving Him you will imitate His goodness." At this point the writer of the Epistle introduces his description of the imitatio which is expected of those who believe in Christ:

Happiness consists not in domination over neighbours, nor in wishing to have more than the weak, nor in wealth, and power to compel those who are poorer, nor can anyone be an imitator of God (μιμησάσθαι θεόν), in doing these things, but these things are outside His majesty. But whoever takes up the burden of his neighbour (ὅστις τὸ τοῦ πλησίου ἀναδέχεται βάρος), and wishes to help another, who is worse off in that in which he is the stronger, and by ministering to those in need the things which he has received and holds from God becomes a God to those who receive them, - this man is an imitator of God.¹⁶⁰

This passage is of particular importance because of what it tells us of the imitatio Christi. That man is an imitator of God "who takes up the burden of his neighbour." The word used for "takes up," ἀναδέχομαι, is the same as that used in the previous chapter in which it was said that God in pity "took responsibility for our sin."¹⁶¹ As God through Christ took up the

¹⁶⁰Diog. 10:5,6.

¹⁶¹The word ἀναδέχομαι is used only twice in the New Testament, and nowhere else in the early Christian Fathers except in these two passages in the Epistle.

burden of our sin - and the consequence of this was the cross - so those who would imitate God are to take up the burden of their neighbour. Here again we see how the concept of imitatio Christi is treated ontologically, not moralistically. There is a real correspondence between our imitation of Christ in discipleship and His passion.

The Cultic and Forensic Interpretation of Redemption.

We have tried to see how the writer of the Epistle to Diognetus interprets ransom as the mighty act of God in sending His Son to the world and giving true knowledge, and also as the incarnation of the kinsman-Redeemer whose death is the means of our deliverance from death. There is, however, a third aspect of redemption which we have yet to discuss, to which there has been given the description of the kipper type of ransom. In general this interpretation of redemption is little emphasised in the writings of the second century, but in the present work it receives a distinct place. Indeed, not least of the distinctions of this small Epistle is that the soteriological work of the Redeemer in its cultic or forensic aspect is given prominence along with the work of the Son in creation - a fact which marks out the Epistle from most of its contemporaries.

The idea of the covering of sins. The idea of redemption as the covering of sins is explicitly stated in the passage to which we have frequently referred:

He Himself gave up His own Son as a ransom for us, the Holy for the wicked, the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust
 For what else could cover our sins but His righteousness? (τί γὰρ ἄλλο τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν ἡδυνήθη καλύψαι ἢ ἐκείνου δικαιοσύνη).

The scriptural allusions are fairly obvious: "Blessed is he whose sin is covered"; and, "As for our transgressions, thou shalt cover them."¹⁶² In the New Testament James speaks of the one who converts a sinner as "covering" a multitude of sins (καλύψει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν), and Peter says that love "covers" a multitude of sins (ἀγάπη καλύπτει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν).¹⁶³ In the Epistle it is the δικαιοσύνη of the Son which is said to cover sins: "In whom was it possible for us in our wickedness and impiety to be made just (δικαιοθῆναι), except in the Son of God alone?"¹⁶⁴ For the writer of the Epistle, unlike Paul, the wrath of God and punishment as an expression of this ὀργή play little part in his doctrine of justification, but he is nevertheless convinced of the unrighteousness of sin. God has no pleasure in our sins, which convict us as being unworthy of life and prevent us from entering the kingdom of God. Punishment and death (κόλασις καὶ θάνατος) are the consequence of sin.¹⁶⁵ But God in His love purposes to save man, and it is the goodness and power of this love that has been disclosed to men by God who "Himself in pity took our sin."¹⁶⁶ The love of God is totally unmerited, and it is revealed in the

¹⁶²Ps. 32:1, 65:3. ¹⁶³Jas. 5:20; I Pet. 4:8. ¹⁶⁴Diog. 9:4

¹⁶⁵Diog. 9:1,2; and cf. J. K. Mozley, The Doctrine of Atonement (New York: 1916), p. 69, and in Paul see especially Rom. 1:18.

¹⁶⁶Diog. 9:2.

substitutionary death of the Saviour.

While the writer of the Epistle shows little inclination to offer any profound interpretation of the righteousness of God, He defines God's act of redemption as the covering of men's sins by the righteousness of the Son. The words δίκαιος and δικαιοσύνη are nowhere used in the Epistle of the Father, who is rather defined in terms of His goodness (χρηστοτής), kindness (φιλανθρωπία), love (ἀγάπη), and mercy (ἔλεω).¹⁶⁷ The atonement is thus interpreted rather as a revelation of the love of God than as a forensic decision in regard to His justice, and in this plan of salvation the Son and the Father agree.¹⁶⁸ Since man by himself is incapable of achieving holiness or faith by which alone it is possible to see God, God has revealed His love in sending His Son to be our ransom. The work of the Son is the covering of sin, but the cost of this work is His passion and death. This is the ransom. In this regard the author of the Epistle is in line with the Biblical concept of ransom as "covering" which, as we have noted, is frequently linked with the shedding of blood. God Himself has taken the responsibility for our sins, and by the shedding of the blood of the Holy One the sin of the wicked is covered. By this act of the righteous Son the ungodly are justified. The righteousness of Christ becomes ours:

O the sweet exchange, O the inscrutable creation, O the unexpected benefits, that the wickedness of many should be concealed in the one

¹⁶⁷See Diog. 9, passim. ¹⁶⁸Diog. 9:1, cf. 8:9, 11.

righteous, the righteousness of the one should make righteous many wicked! (ὡς τῆς γλυκείας ἀνταλλαγῆς, ὡς τῆς ἀνεξιχνιάστου δημιουργίας, ὡς τῶν ἀπροσδοκῆτων εὐεργεσιῶν· ἵνα ἀνομία μὲν πολλῶν ἐν δικαίῳ ἐνὶ κρουβή, δικαιοσύνη δὲ ἑνὸς πολλοὺς ἀνόμους δικαίωσῃ).¹⁶⁹

The Son, who is Himself holy, innocent, just, incorruptible, and immortal (ἅγιος , ἀναισχος , δίκαιος , ἀφθαρτος , ὁθάνατος), by dying for us justifies us, covers our sins, and makes us respond to His initial act of grace. By His death, therefore, a real change has been effected in man. A true substitution has been accomplished, and in the Son man has actually become righteous. God has become in man his light, glory, strength, and life,¹⁷⁰ and by the righteousness of the Son man has now access to the kingdom of God.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹Diog. 9:5.

¹⁷⁰See Diog. 9:6 and the illuminating analysis in Moberly, Atonement and Personality, pp. 330f. Man's sin, says Moberly, is "merged, buried, done away, gone." The result is not a dishonest treatment of the unholy as holy, but is the actual beauty of holiness in man. See too J. S. Lidgett, The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement, p. 424. Lidgett maintains that the Epistle to Diognetus may properly stand at the head of the so-called moral doctrines of the Atonement; cf. also ibid. p. 423.

¹⁷¹Diog. 9:1.

CHAPTER II

THE PASSOVER AND THE PASSION OF OUR LORD IN THE HOMILY OF MELITO OF SARDIS

I. A CHRISTIAN SERMON FROM AN ARCHETYPAL ERA

The Importance of the "Homily"

The recently discovered text of the Homily of Melito, Bishop of Sardis, has further illuminated for us the interpretation of the passion of Christ in the second century.¹ The Homily was apparently preached on the day of the Christian Pascha,² and is thus more taken up with the crucifixion than the resurrection. Melito interprets the death of Christ typologically as the fulfilment of the Jewish Passover. This particular homiletic form had a fairly obvious attraction for its preacher. As a Bishop in the Church which took the Quartodeciman side of the Easter controversy Melito felt entitled to relate the Passover to the passion of Christ in accordance with the Quartodeciman liturgical tradition, which was that the death of Christ took place on the day of the slaying of the

¹See Campbell Bonner, The Homily on the Passion, by Melito, Bishop of Sardis (London and Philadelphia: 1940).

²Bonner, Homily, p. 19, says that it was preached on "Good Friday." This is doubtful, as we shall try to show later.

Paschal lamb.³

Its contribution to hymnography. The Homily is of importance for several reasons. Its contribution to hymnography has been noted by Dr. Egon Wellesz:

(The Homily) helps us to realise more fully the part played by the poetical homily in linking the earliest forms of Christian oratorical prose, which contain poetical elements, with the beginnings of Byzantine poetry.⁴

The Homily is technically a Kontakion (κοντάκιον or κονδάκιον) or poetical sermon sung after the chanting (ἐκφώνησις) of the Gospel lesson. It has a strong metrical structure, and Melito makes use of anaphora, antithesis, and parallel clauses with similar endings (ὁμοιοτέλευτα),⁵ which have the effect of rhyme.

A sermon from an age of controversy. The Homily is of great value to us for a second reason. The literature of the second century is generally polemical in character. It is a period of controversy and debate, in which the Gospel comes into conflict with Judaism, philosophy, and

³Jules Lebreton et Jacques Zeiller, Histoire de l'Eglise, Saint-Dizier, 1935, English translation The History of the Primitive Church, (London: 1946), Vol. III, p. 587; see also C. Schmidt, Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern (Leipzig: 1919), p. 608f.; H. Koch, Zeitschrift für wiss. Theol. N. F., Vol. XX, 4, p. 301.

⁴Egon Wellesz, "Melito's Homily on the Passion: an Investigation into the Sources of Byzantine Hymnography," Harvard Theological Review, Vol. XLIV, 1943, pp. 41ff.

⁵Bonner, Homily, p. 21.

Gnosticism. It is the period of the early credal formulations and the forming of the canon of scripture. To possess a sermon from this archetypal era, i.e. a work for the edification of believers, enables us to get beyond the controversy of the Church in its encounter with alien doctrine and philosophy, and to learn more of the inward faith of primitive Christianity. Melito was a leader of the Church who commanded respect and affection in his own day and later.⁶ The Homily permits a brief but satisfying glimpse into the devotional atmosphere and attitude of the early Church. Its writer is a cultivated leader, concerned to edify believers rather than to enter into controversy, and his vocabulary is rich and reminiscent of Old and New Testament usage. It is, moreover, representative of a type of Paschal Homily which undoubtedly exercised a wide influence in the early Church.⁷ Hippolytus,⁸ for example, is clearly influenced by Melito in his typological treatment of the Passover passage in Exod. 12, but his typology is much more complex than that which we find in Melito.

⁶See Adolf Harnack, Die Ueberlieferung der gr. Apol., Vol. I, pp. 240-78; Geschichte der altchristliche Litteratur, Vol. I, pp. 246-55; Schmidt-Stählin, Geschichte der griechen Litteratur, PT. II, Vol. II, p. 1297. On subsequent opinion of Melito in the early Church see Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica 5.24.5, 5.28.5; Jerome, de viris illustribus, 24.

⁷Berner, Homily, pp. 56-72. See also W. Telfer in Theology, Vol. XLIII, p. 117. Telfer suggests that it is the type rather than Melito's text which exercised the widespread influence.

⁸Migne, Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca, (Paris: 1844-66), Vol. 59.

Its Johannine character. An interesting and illuminating suggestion has recently been made about the Homily:

We know from the Pilgrimage of Etheria (written about 380) that in Jerusalem it was the custom at daybreak to go to the Cross and "ibi denuo legitur ille locus de evangelio, ubi adducitur Dominus," etc. (v.7), and in the Good Friday liturgy as we now have it, the lesson from Exod. 12 (which is that referred to by Melito) is followed by a Tract, then by the singing of the Passion according to St. John. Is it not therefore possible to suppose that already in Melito's time the lesson from Exodus may have been followed by the Gospel of the Passion? His Homily, Johannine in character, is concerned with the relation of the Paschal Lamb with the Christian mystery of the passion of Christ, and if the Passion according to St. John was not actually read, it is supposed to be fresh in the minds of his hearers. But it is more natural to suppose that the Homily followed the reading of the Gospel (as did the Homilies of St. Leo, etc.), and on this hypothesis the Gospel ("the setting forth and fulfilment of the Law," s.40) was the explanation of the "mystery which is old and new . . . old according to the Law, but new according to the Word." Melito's sermon would thus serve the purpose of explaining the connection between the sacrifice of the sheep and the sacrifice of the Son: "The parables are fulfilled, being made clear by the interpretation (s.42)."⁹

The Gospel of St. John represents Jesus as the One at whose coming there is fulfilled the redemptive purpose of God, the coming of the "hour" of the Son of God, and the judgment of the world.¹⁰ Jesus is the fulfillment of the Isaianic prophecy of the Suffering Servant,¹¹ and the One whose coming and death ended, fulfilled, and superseded the sacrificial system of

⁹Fr. Valentine Wood, O. P., Blackfriars, Vol. XXII, pp. 619-22.

¹⁰John 2:4, 4:3, 5:43, 12:23, 13:1, 16:32, 17:1, 12:31.

¹¹Cf. John 12:38 with Isa. 53:1ff.

the Temple.¹²

The ancient Passover is similarly fulfilled in the death of Jesus. In the Passion narrative in John it is stated: "These things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."¹³ The "scripture" referred to is Exod. 12, though John quotes loosely. The Passover lamb was not only slain for the commemorative meal, it was also to be offered in accordance with prescribed ordinances¹⁴ and be ritually immaculate. In this passage John sees in Christ the ritual fulfillment foreshadowed by the offering of the Paschal lamb.¹⁵

John the Baptist's designation of Jesus as "the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" has occasioned much controversy.¹⁶ It is probably correct to say that, while there is no parallel in the Old Testa-

¹²Cf. John 2: 13-23 where the cleansing of the Temple at the time of the Passover of its oxen, sheep, and doves is accompanied by the word of Jesus about the rising of the new Temple, sc. His Body in the Resurrection.

¹³John 19:36. ¹⁴Cf. Num. 9:12.

¹⁵J. H. Bernard, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John (Edinburgh: 1948), p. 651. Paul's "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (I Cor. 5:7) is in agreement with the Evangelist. See also Bernard, op.cit., p. clv.

¹⁶See the discussion in C. J. Ball, Expository Times, Vol. XXI (1909), p. 92f.; C. F. Burney, The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel (Oxford: 1922), pp. 104-8; C. H. Dodd, Bulletin of John Rylands Library, No. XXI (April 1937), p. 146; J. Jeremias, Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, (Giessen: 1935), Vol. XXXIV, p. 115f.; Bernard, St. John, pp. 43-7; Journal of Theological Studies, Vol. XLVIII (1947), p. 155f.

ment to the idea of the lamb bearing the people's sin,¹⁷ the Johannine lamb-Christology represents the reading of a Christian concept into the Passover terminology with conscious reference to the Isaianic Suffering Servant.¹⁸ Though J. H. Bernard in his *Commentary* does not mention the possibility of a Passover reference in John 1, it is almost certain that John's primary reference is to the Paschal lamb, and that the idea of sin-bearing is a Christian reinterpretation of the Paschal lamb concept.¹⁹ The passage, in other words, represents a conflation of two originally distinct ideas - the idea of Jesus as the Paschal lamb, and Jesus as the Servant who takes away the sin of the world.²⁰

Bonner maintains that there are only three specific allusions to the Gospel of St. John in Melito's *Homily*: (i) 78, "Nor did the most marvelous sign of all abash thee, a dead man buried in the tomb for four days yet raised up by Him." (οὐδὲ τὸ καινότερόν σε ἐ(δυσάπησεν) σημεῖον, νεκρὸς ἐν μν(ημεῖω τεθαμ)μένος ἥδη τεσσάρων (ἡμερῶν)).²¹ (ii) 95, in which the inscription above the Cross is referred to as the τίτλος.²² (iii) 70, in which the words from Exodus, "a bone of him shall not be bro-

¹⁷W. F. Howard, *Christianity According to St. John* (London: 1943), p. 100.

¹⁸Isa. 53:1ff.

¹⁹C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: 1955), p. 146f.

²⁰R. H. Strachan, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: 1941), p. 113 says, "Jesus is here identified with the Paschal lamb." But this does not say enough. Jesus is also here identified with the Isaianic sin-bearer.

²¹Gf. John 11: 39-44. ²² Cf. John 19:19.

ken," are applied to Jesus on the Cross: οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐν παρθένῳ σαρκωθεὶς, ὁ [ἐπὶ] ξύλου μὴ συντριβείς. ²³

The relationship between the Homily and the Gospel is, however, much closer than these three allusions. The Homily is Johannine not simply in character and even language,²⁴ but especially in its lamb-Christology it echoes the Johannine and Pauline interpretation of Christ as the Passover Lamb who is sacrificed for us.²⁵ We shall later examine in fuller detail the idea of the suffering of Christ as the true Passover, but at this point we desire simply to establish the relationship between the Homily and the Gospel for the interpretation of the Passover in the Gospel will help to throw light on the Homily.

²³Cf. John 19:34ff.

²⁴Cf. Hom. 11.11 with John 1:17; note the connexion between sin and death in John 5:24; 8:31-6, 51; 12:48; 16:8 (of sin and judgment) and in Hom. e.g. at 7f. Cf. also the allusions in Hom. 22-30 to the Gospel's understanding of Jesus as the Lamb, John 1:29, 36, light, John 8:12, Saviour, John 4:42, Resurrection, John 11:25. In particular cf. Hom. 28f., ἐγὼ ὑμῖν δείξω [τὸν] ἀπ' αἰώνων πατέρα with John 14:8, δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν πατέρα, and Hom. 29f., ἀναστήσω, διὰ τῆς ἐμῆς δεξιᾶς with John 6:40, ἀναστήσω αὐτὸν ἐγὼ τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.

²⁵Cf. J. B. Lightfoot, The Fourth Gospel (New York: 1891), pp. 349-56; C. H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel (Cambridge: 1953), pp. 233-8, 424, 428; J. Jeremias, Die Abendmahls Worte Jesu (Göttingen: 1960) English translation, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus (Oxford: 1955), pp. 31-36.

II. THE PASSOVER AND TYPOLOGY.

The Passover and the Passion of Christ.

The Homily is a Paschal sermon. The passage from Exodus 12 has been read, in which the killing of the Paschal lamb is described. This may have been followed by the reading of the Passion according to St. John. At any rate the theme of Melito's discourse is the new and eternal Christian Passover, which is the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ.

The Passover. Whatever may have been the origin of the Passover,²⁶ it is the oldest of the feasts of the Old Testament and pre-Mosaic, though by the time of Moses it was definitely connected with the Exodus from Egypt. The general significance of the feast is fairly clear. In its earliest, pre-Mosaic form it appears to have been a pastoral or nomadic offering of the firstborn. The reference in Genesis may testify to a primitive offering of the firstborn which later became assimilated into the Passover of the period of the Exodus:

And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the first of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.²⁷

²⁶E. Dhorme, La Religion des Hebreux Nomades (Paris: 1937), p.211; H. D. B., Vol. III, pp. 684-92; T. H. Gaster, Passover: its History and Tradition (New York: 1949); G. B. Gray in Journal of Theological Studies, Vol. XXXVII, 1936, pp. 241ff.; H. Haag, Luzerner Theologische Studien, 1954, p. 17ff.; N. H. Snaith, The Jewish New Year Festival (London: 1947), p. 13ff. l.c.

²⁷Gen. 4:2ff.

It would appear from Exodus that the enslaved Israelites had frequently requested the opportunity to keep their feast of the offering of the firstborn in the wilderness, without success.²⁸ Thus the feast may be said to have been the occasion rather than the consequence of the Exodus. At the same time, however, we can trace developments and reinterpretations of the feast, which become yet clearer later in the Old Testament, and notably in Ezekiel. In Exod. 12, for example, the stress is on the memorial aspect of the Passover which is stated to have been instituted in order that God might spare His firstborn.²⁹ From the earliest period the Passover appears to have been an expiatory feast.³⁰ The lamb is sacrificed in place of the children of the Israelites, and is thus in essentials a piacular sacrifice. In the Exodus passage great emphasis is laid on the blood ceremonial. From the time of the Exodus it was regarded as the feast par excellence which commemorated the emancipation of the people of God from their captivity and in a sense the birth of the nation, Israel. We shall see briefly how important this aspect became in the time of the Exile. There are in the meantime, however, two major developments in the

²⁸Exod. 3:18, 7:16, 8:27.

²⁹Exod. 12:1-20. See G. Beer, Exodus (Tübingen: 1939), p. 62ff.; H. Junker, Prophet und Seher in Israel (Bonn: 1927), p. 96ff.; N. H. Snaith, "Sacrifices in the Old Testament" in Vetus Testamentum, Vol. VII, 1957, p. 308ff.

³⁰Julius Wellhausen, Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel (New York: 1957), pp. 82-117.

Passover which are of importance to us:

In the first place, the Passover gradually lost its agricultural and pastoral character. By the time of the Exile the eschatological character of the feast was marked by the hope that Jahveh, whose mighty act of delivering the ancient fathers from Egypt was therein commemorated, would show His strength again as at the first by saving His people.³¹ At every Passover the participants re-experienced the deliverance and happiness of the first Exodus, and thus fortifying themselves by reliving their ancient common history, looked forward to a new Exodus from the place of their new captivity. The eschatological motif in the Passover during the Exile is strong.³²

In the second place, the Passover began to be less of a domestic and individual celebration, and to become more the collective and representative act of the nation. By the time of the Exile we see how far this tendency has developed. In Ezekiel, for example, there is no mention of any private celebration of the Passover, which has become the ritual ceremony of the community offered by the prince for himself and for the community.³³ In Deuteronomy it is explicitly stated that the Passover may not be sacrificed as a private rite, but only in the Temple in Jerusalem.³⁴

³¹Johannes Pedersen, Israel (Oxford: 1940), Vols. III-IV, pp. 477, 584.

³²Cf. Hos. 12:9. God will make the people start again, and become as they had been at the beginning of their history. The "solemn feast" is the Passover.

³³Ezek. 45, 46. ³⁴Deut. 16:2,6,7.

The centralisation of the celebration of the feast, combined with the atoning significance of the sin-offering which Ezekiel emphasised in the Passover, increasingly gave it a representative and expiatory character. The Passover is the act that is done for all the people, and it has atoning significance.

The Christian Pascha. The theme of the Homily is the connexion between the Passover and the death of Christ. There were several factors which made this connexion easy for Melito.

In the first place there is a strong possibility that there already existed in his time a liturgical connexion between the Passover and the death of Christ. We have already discussed the evidence for maintaining that in the early Church the lection from Exod. 12 was read before the Passion narrative according to St. John. It would seem, however, that to argue that as early as the second century we can trace a separation between Good Friday and Easter, as Fr. Wood does, we require a stronger basis than a book dating to the fourth century. For this reason we also think that Bonner's description of the Homily as a "Good Friday sermon" is open to question.³⁵

It is fairly well established that the Christian Pascha (πάσχα) was a unitive commemoration of both the death and the resurrection of

³⁵Bonner, Homily, p. 19.



Christ. Dom Gregory Dix states that there is no evidence at all before the fourth century of a separate commemoration of the passion on Good Friday and the resurrection on Easter Sunday, one the day of mourning and the other of joy.³⁶ The Christian Pascha was evidently a single liturgical commemoration, beginning on Saturday with a vigil, continuing through the night with the reading of scripture, and culminating in the sacrament of baptism at dawn, if this had not already been celebrated, followed by the eucharist.³⁷ Friday was regarded as forming part of the Paschal fast period, but if anything, Friday seems to have been the less important day.³⁸

The Homily was thus appropriate to the Paschal period, though, as we have suggested, to call it "a Good Friday sermon" is an anachronism. The likelihood is that it was preached, after the reading of the lessons, on "the Day of the Pasch," viz. the Saturday (though conceivably on the Friday) before Easter. The direction in Exod. 12 states that the paschal lamb was to be sacrificed "at even," literally "between the evenings." This appears to mean "between sunset and darkness." Josephus interprets

³⁶Gregory Dix, The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome (London: 1937), Vol. I, pp. 73f.; The Shape of the Liturgy (second edition; London: 1945), pp. 348-53.

³⁷See Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition, 3.29.2; R. H. Connolly (ed.), Didascalia Apostolorum (London: 1903), p. 188f.; A. Alan McArthur, Evolution of the Christian Year, (London: 1953), pp. 87-98.

³⁸Tertullian, On Fasting, 14. Significantly, however, he does not refer to the Friday of the Paschal feast as Pascha.

this to mean "from the ninth to the eleventh hour," i.e. between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.³⁹ John in his Gospel says it was the "sixth hour" when the order was given to crucify Christ. This conflict with the Synoptic timing may have been accidental, but it may more probably have been intended to represent the death of Christ as occurring at the time when the passover sacrifices were being killed in the Temple.⁴⁰ We have, if this is so, another strand of evidence for the assertion that the Homily points to an already existing liturgical connexion between the Passover and the death of Christ.

In the second place Melito found another link between the Passover and the death of Christ in the convenient but quite false etymology of πάσχα and πάσχειν. Melito explains the "plan of the mystery" of the Passover thus:

What is the Passover? It is so called from that which befell; that is from "suffer" and "be suffering" (τί ἐστι τὸ πάσχα; ἀπο γὰρ συμβεβηκότος τὸ ὄνομα κέκληται ἐν γὰρ τοῦ παθεῖν καὶ πάσχειν).⁴¹

The derivation of πάσχα from πάσχειν entirely ignores the Hebrew-Aramaic origin of the term, but a relationship between the two would without difficulty be suggested to Greek-speaking Christians.⁴²

³⁹Josephus, The Jewish War, 6.423.

⁴⁰G. K. Barrett, The Gospel according to St. John, p. 454.

⁴¹Hom. 46.

⁴²Cf. Justin Martyr, Dialogue, 40; Irenaeus, Proof of the Apostolic Preaching, 25; A.h. (Adversus haereses), IV.xx.1.

Typology in the Bible.

A third and more important factor which enabled Melite to connect the Passover with the death of Christ was his typology. Fr. Jean Daniélou speaks of prophecy as "the typological interpretation of history,"⁴³ and the constitutive element which relates the New Testament to the Exodus. There is, in other words, a genuine historical correspondence between the type and its antitype.

The Exodus typology. In speaking of typology we must make a radical distinction between this legitimate method of Biblical interpretation and arbitrary allegorising.⁴⁴ Typology is concerned with actual historical events and persons, and represents the attempt to determine and interpret the relationship between the type and the antitype. In this sense the prophets, the evangelists, and the other writers of the New Testament cannot be wholly understood apart from the correspondence which they presuppose between one event or person and another. In the Old Testament, for example, the historical event par excellence which provided the beginning of typological interpretation was the Exodus. For the prophets, particularly the prophets of the Exile, the Exodus, which had been the seal of

⁴³Jean Daniélou, From Shadows to Reality (London: 1960), p. 157.

⁴⁴See G. W. H. Lampe and K. J. Woolcombe, Essays on Typology (Naperville: 1957); W. G. Kümmel, Promise and Fulfilment; R. C. P. Hanson, Allegory and Event (London: 1959), 65-96.

and the decisive act in God's election and deliverance of His people, constituted the type of God's power to redeem His people,⁴⁵ and of His compassion for Israel and His commissioning of this nation for service. The idea of the Exodus in the past becomes the content of Israel's eschatological hope in the Exile, from which again God the Redeemer will deliver His people, as He had done in the days of old.⁴⁶

The strong Exodus typology of the Old Testament prophets is also found fairly widely in Judaism of the time of Jesus. It is characteristic of this period that salvation is represented in terms of the Exodus: Moses is a type of Messiah; in the coming Kingdom of the Messiah Israel will again be fed on divinely provided food and drink, as Israel had been fed and given drink in the wilderness; and the final salvation of the people will take place in the spring, as had the original Passover.⁴⁷ This typological connexion between the Exodus and the coming Messianic age has always been stressed in the observances of Judaism to the present

⁴⁵The word "redeem," *קָדַם*, used by the prophets of the Exile of Israel's future deliverance is the same word that was used characteristically to describe the Exodus from Egypt.

⁴⁶Isa. 4:5, 10:26, 11:15, 43:16-20, 48:21f., 49:10, 52:12; Jer. 23:7, 31:31ff.; Ezek. 20:33; Hos. 2:14f., 8:13, 12:9, 13:4; Mic. 5:9. See also J. Guillet, "Le thème de la Marche au désert dans l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament," in *Rech. Sc. Rel.*, 1949, p. 164f.; L. Goppelt, *Typos, Die typologische Deutung des Alten Testaments im Neuen* (Gütersloh: 1939), p. 38f.

⁴⁷See Goppelt, *Typos*, p. 30f.; G. F. Moore, *Judaism* (Cambridge: 1927-30), Vol. II, p. 367f.; H. L. Strack und Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* (München: 1922-28), Vol. II, p. 481.

day. These, says Will Herberg, are "the acting-out of the Jew's affirmation of the election of Israel and its 'separation' as 'priest-people.'"⁴⁸ When the Jew shares in the Passover, the sacred history of Israel becomes his own spiritual history, Israel's Exodus from Egypt his own Exodus, and Israel's wanderings under the guidance of God his own pilgrimage in fellowship with the Lord who had redeemed Israel and brought it into the chosen land.⁴⁹

New Testament typology. With regard to the New Testament we now come into a sphere where typology, in the approximate sense in which we have defined it, comes into its own. Paul writes to the Corinthians, "All these things happened unto them for ensamples" (ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινον αὐτοῖς).⁵⁰ The τύποι to which he refers are events in the history of Israel, notably the events of the Exodus, which he interprets as belonging to the same redemptive line on which he now sees the cross of Christ. The writers of the New Testament do not use the Old Testament for homiletical illustration or a source for moralising. They see, rather, the events which it recounts as forming a continuous process in the redemptive history of God's people which culminates in the supreme event of the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

⁴⁸Will Herberg, Judaism and Modern Man (Philadelphia: 1951), p. 298f.

⁴⁹Ibid. p. 288ff. ⁵⁰I Cor. 10:11.

The Gospel writers are full of this kind of typology. Luke's narrative of the raising of the widow's son at Nain, with its statement that a great prophet had appeared, must not only have reminded his readers of the similarity between this healing miracle of Jesus and the achievements of Elijah and Elisha. It stood also as a witness that Christ is the antitype in whom God has visited His people and as a sign of the Messianic kingdom.⁵¹ Even more remarkably in Acts we find that in his speech given at his trial, or at least reported as having been given in this form, Stephen makes no allusion whatever to Jesus, despite the fact that the accusation against him was that he was preaching in the name of Jesus. The whole speech, however, as reported implies a typological correspondence between Christ and Moses.⁵² Paul's reference to Christ as "the last Adam" (ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ)⁵³ and to Adam as the type of Christ (τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος)⁵⁴ along with many other passages where the Adam-typology is implied,⁵⁵ confirm the argument that the writers of the New Testament saw the redemption accomplished by Christ as at the one time being discontinuous with the redemptive history of the Old Testament in virtue of its ἐφάπαξ character, and at the same time being continuous with it, as the relationship between historical event and fulfilment testified.⁵⁶ The Fourth Gospel, and in particular its narrative of the passion,

⁵¹Luke 7:11-17. ⁵²Acts 7. ⁵³I Cor. 15:45.

⁵⁴Rom. 5:14. ⁵⁵E.g. Phil. 2:5-11.

⁵⁶On Paul's Adam typology see Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (London: 1958), pp. 245-9.

is incomprehensible apart from the typological interpretation of the Passover sacrifice. In John the Son of God was crucified at the very moment when the Paschal lamb was being sacrificed in the Temple.⁵⁷

There is, however, in the New Testament a further and supreme demonstration of the relationship between the type and the antitype, and this is the death and resurrection of Christ and the eschatological hope of His second coming. The early Christians lived in the Zwischenseit, the period between the death of Christ and His return. For them, however, the resurrection of Christ was the pledge of God's final great act of restoration. Of all this the pattern of annihilation and restoration which we find, notably in the Exodus and the Exile, is the type which has its historical correspondence in the death and resurrection of Christ.⁵⁸

Typology in Melito

The element of typology is strong in Melito. Let us examine his typology, first, in relation to the law, and second, in relation to the Passover.

Typology of the law. In discussing the Law, Melito compares it to the plaster cast or scale model made by the sculptor before the work itself. With the completion of the work, the model can be dispensed with. It was merely "a work of preparation" (κατασκευῆς ἔργον).⁵⁹ We see this clearly in the following passages:

⁵⁷John 19:30f.

⁵⁸See Ezek. 37:1-14; Isa. 64:1-8; Mal. 3:1-4,6; Isa. 66:5-24; Mal. 3:2f.; and cf. G. A. F. Knight, A Christian Theology of the Old Testament (London: 1959), pp. 207-10.

⁵⁹Hcm. 35.

Is it not set up because of that which is to be, this pattern of wax or clay or wood, made for this reason, that that which is to be raised up - loftier in height, and mightier in power, and beautiful in form, and rich in adornment - may be seen through a small perishable pattern? But when that arises with relation to which the type exists, that which once bore (the type) of what was to be is destroyed as useless, yielding up to the truth of nature the image of that truth.⁶⁰

For indeed the salvation and truth of the Lord were foreshadowed in the people, and the ordinances of the Gospel were proclaimed beforehand by the Law. So the people became the pattern of the Church, and the Law the writing of a parable, and the Gospel the setting-forth and fulfilment of the law (διήγημα νόμου καὶ πλήρωμα), and the Church the reservoir of the truth.⁶¹

(But since the) Church arose and (the Gospel) was shed abroad upon men on (earth), the type is made void, giving over the image to the natural truth.⁶²

When the pattern or type of the Law has fulfilled its purpose in the Gospel, it has ceased to have any purpose. Nevertheless, the type itself is of significance, because of the truth to which it points. For Melito, as with many of the early Fathers, typology is not simply an allegorical interpretation of Scripture, but an attempt to interpret history in terms of the progressive and undeviating purpose of God in redemption. History, for the typologist, is Heilsgeschichte, and therefore for Melito it was reasonable to assume that in the Law, and particularly, as we shall see, in the Passover, there are foreshadowings of or pointers to the revelation given in Christ to be found in the Old Testament types.

Typology of the Passover. In discussing the Passover Melito again finds a historical correspondence between the type and the antitype. The

⁶⁰Hom. 36f. ⁶¹Hom. 39f.

⁶²Hom. 42; cf. also Origen, Hom. 10.1 in Lev.; Chrysostom, Hom. 10.2 in Phil.; Lampe and Woolcombe, Essays in Typology, p. 71f.

Passover

is new and old, eternal and transient, corruptible and incorruptible, mortal and immortal. It is old according to the Law, but new according to the Word; transient according to the world, but eternal through grace; corruptible as to the slaughter of the sheep, incorruptible because of the life of the Lord; mortal because of the burial (of the Lord), immortal because of His resurrection from (the dead).⁶³

Once the sacrifice of the sheep was held in honour; now it is worthless because of the life of the Lord; honoured was the death of the sheep, but now of no account because of the Lord's salvation; precious was the blood of the sheep, but now of no worth because of the Spirit of the Lord; precious was the dumb lamb, but now of no worth because of the unblemished Son.⁶⁴

The Passover, which Melito refers to as a "mystery," has been fulfilled in the body of the Lord,⁶⁵ as has been foretold by the prophets.⁶⁶ The Passover, which Melito refers to as a "mystery," has been fulfilled in the body of the Lord,⁶⁵ as has been foretold by the prophets.⁶⁶ Melito can thus refer to Christ as "the Passover of our salvation" (τὸ πάσχα τῆς σωτηρίας ἡμῶν),⁶⁷ because of the typological correspondence between the Paschal lamb and Christ, the Lamb who was slain for us as our ransom.⁶⁸

This is why Melito can find that the Old Testament type of the Passover is a significant and powerful mystery: "The type, then, was precious before the truth came, the parable was wondrous before its interpretation."⁶⁹ The sacrifice of the Paschal lamb proved to be the salvation of Israel, but for this reason: it was the "mystery of the Lord, enacted in

⁶³Hom. 2f. ⁶⁴Hom. 44. ⁶⁵Hom. 56. ⁶⁶Hom. 65.

⁶⁷Hom. 69. ⁶⁸Hom. 103. ⁶⁹Hom. 41.

the sheep, the life of the Lord in the sacrifice of the sheep, the type of the Lord in the death of the sheep,"⁷⁰ that brought life and deliverance to the people and abashed the angel of death. The "mystery" of the Passover is the death of Christ, foreshadowed in the lives of the patriarchs and declared by the prophets.⁷¹ The Passover of the Old Testament points forward to Christ, whose sacrificial death not only fulfills the type but also is manifested in it:

This is He who was made flesh in a virgin, whose bones were not broken upon the tree, who in burial was not resolved into earth, who arose from the dead, and raised man from the grave below to the heights of the heavens. This is the lamb that was slain, this is the lamb that was dumb, this is He that was born of Mary the fair ewe, this is He who was (taken) from the flock and dragged to slaughter and (slain at evening) and buried by night.⁷²

III. CHRIST, THE PASSOVER SACRIFICED FOR US

The Christology of the Homily.

Melito ends his Homily in these words:

This is He who first made heaven and earth, who in the beginning (created) man, who was proclaimed by Law and Prophets, who was made flesh in a virgin, who was (hanged) upon a tree, who was buried in the earth, who (rose) from the dead and went up to (the heights of heaven)."

The first Syriac fragments adds, "And sitteth at the right hand of the Father." There were problems of Christology for the Apologists and Fathers of the second century, and the relation of the divine and human in Christ, finally established in doctrinal form at Nicaea, was variously described by

⁷⁰Hom. 31ff. ⁷¹Hom. 59-65. ⁷²Hom. 70f.

the Ebionites, Docetists, and Gnostics. In Melito we find a somewhat naive "pneumatic" Christology according to which Jesus was seen as a pre-existent divine being who united Himself with human nature, lived a human life, being made flesh through a virgin, and having suffered for man's sin, was crucified and buried. He was, however, raised by God from the dead, and restored again to heaven. It has to be noted, however, that though not entirely absent, the ideas of resurrection and ascension occupy a minor place in Melito's thinking, and have no part in the scheme of salvation.

We have already seen how in Hermas the pre-existent Son of God is identified with the Holy Spirit who, at the incarnation, came and dwelt in Jesus, the Servant and Saviour Lord.⁷³ Melito, however, is free of the confused binitarianism and adoptionism of Hermas. Confusions in Christology we do find in Melito. The statement that the Son "is all things . . . in that He begets, Father, in that He is begotten, Son,"⁷⁴ may suggest if not a crude at least an insufficiently considered modalism. We are, however, to remember that Melito is preaching and not writing theology. He is not greatly concerned about the manner in which the two natures are combined in Christ. He is concerned with the salvation and edification of his congregation. He has the Gospel to preach:

For led as a lamb and slaughtered as a sheep, He ransomed us from the ruin of the world as from the land of Egypt, and freed us from the slavery of the devil as from the hand of Pharaoh, and sealed our souls with His own spirit and the members of our bodies with his own blood.⁷⁵

⁷³Hermas, Sim. 5.6.5-7. ⁷⁴Hom. 8f. ⁷⁵Hom. 67.

It is for this that Christ has come, Christ who is all things and contains all things. But let us now consider in fuller detail the nature and work of the Christ whom Melito proclaims.

The divinity and pre-existence of Christ. Melito's Homily, in the words of Campbell Bonner, is "dominated by the conception of the divinity and pre-existence of Christ."⁷⁶ Christ is the "unblemished Son" who dwells "above" with the Father, who contains all things, and to whom belongs eternal glory.⁷⁷ This eternal Christ has become man for our redemption:

For born as a Son, led forth as a lamb, sacrificed as a sheep, buried as a man, He rose from the dead as God, being by nature God and man.⁷⁸

It is this divine Son who was crucified for us:

Lawless Israel, why hast thou done this new wrong and brought new suffering upon the Lord . . . this is the firstborn of God, this is He who was begotten before the morning star, who made the light to rise, who made the day bright, who parted the darkness, who made the first mark for the creation, who hung the earth in its place.⁷⁹

The combination of impassioned rhetoric and naive modalism could allow Melito to describe the death of Christ in patripassionist terms:

He who hung the earth in its place is hanged, He who fixed the heavens is fixed upon the cross, He who made all things fast is made fast upon the tree, the Master has been insulted, God has been murdered, the King of Israel has been slain by an Israelitish hand.⁸⁰

Melito's concern, however, is to stress that the One crucified for men is fully the divine Son of God, but these and similar modalistic expressions

⁷⁶Bonner, Hom. p. 27. ⁷⁷Hom. 44,5,10. ⁷⁸Hom. 8.

⁷⁹Hom. 82. ⁸⁰Hom. 96

allowed the Theopaschite heretics of a later generation to look back to Melito as a defender of their position.⁸¹ We must, however, understand that Melito is strongly concerned to stress that it is the divine and pre-existent Son of God who has endured the cross. It is God who has "put on man, and suffered for the sufferer, and was bound for him who was bound, and judged for him who was condemned, and buried for him who was buried."⁸²

It is, moreover, this same divine Christ who arose from the dead. Melito, however, not only passes over the resurrection with little more than a mention, but has nothing at all to say in regard to God as the One who raised Christ from the dead and thereby vindicated Him. He mentions the resurrection, but he has little to say about it. Granted that his references to it occur in the conclusion of his sermon, and that he understands Christ's resurrection as the resurrection also of believers -

I am your saviour, I am the resurrection, I am your king, I will lead you up to the heights of the heavens, I will show you the Father who is from the ages, I will raise you up by my right hand,⁸³ -

yet he does not interpret Christ's resurrection as having any redemptive significance. Indeed, it is perhaps consistent with Melito's general modalistic interpretation that Christ Himself is made the author of His own resurrection, not God:

⁸¹E.g. Anastasius of Sinai, Hodegos, P.G. 89,197A.

⁸²Hom. 100. ⁸³Hom. 103.

I am the Christ, I am He who put down death, and triumphed over the enemy, and trod upon Hades, and bound the strong one and brought man safely home to the heights of the heavens.⁸⁴

Christ as the Firstborn. We have previously observed that Melito was in some uncertainty about the relationship between the Father and the Son. He was, however, in no doubt, first, that a distinction is to be made between the Father and the Son, and second, that a connexion is to be made between the divinity of Christ and His passion. In both cases we find illumination by studying Melito's interpretation of Christ as the firstborn.

The most obvious reference of the term "firstborn" in Melito is to the firstborn of the Egyptians who were overtaken by death as a result of Pharaoh's disobedience. Moses in Egypt is told that God wishes to bind Pharaoh under the scourge and to loose Israel from the scourge, and that He will smite Egypt and make her childless.⁸⁵ In a moving passage Melito represents the scene:

These were the troubles that encompassed the Egyptians: a long night, palpable darkness, groping Death, a destroying angel, and Hades swallowing up their firstborn. But you are still to hear the strangest and most terrifying thing of all. In the darkness that could be felt was hidden death that could not be felt Some firstborn child, grasping a dark form in his arms, and terrified in his soul, cried out piteously and fearfully But before the firstborn ceased speaking, the long silence of death came upon him, saying, 'I am firstborn Law; I am thy destiny, the silence of death.'⁸⁶

Israel in Egypt, however, is preserved by the sprinkling of the blood of the Passover lamb from the onset of death: "The sacrifice of the sheep

⁸⁴Hom. 102. ⁸⁵Exod. 11:5, 12:12,29. ⁸⁶Hom. 22-5.

was found to be the salvation of Israel, and the death of the sheep became the life of the people, and the blood abashed the angel."⁸⁷ That is, deliverance from the death which threatens the firstborn of Egypt is secured through the sprinkling of the blood of the Passover lamb.

For Melito, as for the Apostle Paul, ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινον. He has already described "the troubles that encompassed the Egyptians," and the death which has afflicted their firstborn both of humans and of animals. The Homily summarises the basic elements of the events surrounding the Passover. It is of especial importance to note what follows in the development of his argument. "You have heard now," he states, "the story of the type and of the retribution," i.e. the story of the death of the firstborn in Egypt and the preservation of Israel through the sprinkled blood of the lamb. "Hear also," Melito goes on, "the plan of the mystery."⁸⁸

At this point Melito at once quotes the Commandment given by God in the Garden, and goes on to discuss man's fall and the progression of sin in the world.⁸⁹ Sin is the "co-worker of death" (ἡ τοῦ θανάτου συνεργός),⁹⁰ and man is in bondage to both. The human situation is that calamity and ruin encompasses man. All this predicament, however, has been prefigured in the calamity and ruin that encompassed Egypt. The death of the firstborn in

⁸⁷Hom. 31; cf. 15ff. ⁸⁸Hom. 46. ⁸⁹Hom. 47. ⁹⁰Hom. 54.

Egypt is a type of the death consequent on sin which afflicts the race of man. Indeed, Melito is being more than rhetorical when he says that in Egypt "there was meaning and beating of the breast for the destruction of mankind, for the dead firstborn."⁹¹ The death of the firstborn in Egypt is in fact a type of the bondage of all mankind to sin and its destruction by death.

It is in this context that we can begin to see the full significance that Melito found in the term "firstborn." Jesus in His own person is the "firstborn" of God.⁹² As such He is to be distinguished from the Father. He is the unblemished Son, begotten of God, and destined to suffer.⁹³ Thus the term "firstborn" applies in the first instance to Jesus Christ in His relationship to the Father.

It has also, however, a direct reference to the voluntary humiliation of our Saviour and His assumption of our frail humanity. Christ has come in our place to suffer and undergo the calamity and ruin that encompasses man. Christ is our firstborn, representative of a humanity in bondage to sin and death. He has come from heaven to earth for the sake of suffering man, and has been made flesh through a virgin, and has been betrayed and slain, and buried in the tomb.⁹⁴ This is why Melito can refer to our salvation as the destruction of death and our ransom from the ruin of the world as from the land of Egypt. Christ has "freed us from the

⁹¹Hom. 28. ⁹²Hom. 82. ⁹³Hom. 44,5,7,8,9,76. ⁹⁴Hom. 66.

slavery of the devil as from the hand of Pharaoh, and sealed our souls with His own spirit and the members of our bodies with His own blood."⁹⁵ Thus the passion of the Lord which has been seen in the Passover as its type is the redemption of Adam, the "firstborn" man on earth. "Adam," man, has been released from the prison of the condemned.⁹⁶

Sin.

The bondage of man. Christ has come to redeem man from the destruction of death and the ruin of the world. But what is man? What is his condition? How has he fallen into this calamity and ruin?

As with Irenaeus and other early Christian Fathers, Melito derives his doctrine of man and the human predicament from the Old Testament. Irenaeus, for example, understands man and man's situation only as he understands Adam in his creation, his enjoyment of paradise, his fall, and finally his bondage to sin and death. The whole of human life is subject to the tyranny of the oppressor. Similarly Irenaeus understands salvation only as he understands what Christ, as the One who has assumed "the substance of Adam," has done on the cross.⁹⁷

Melito also finds his doctrine of man in the Old Testament, partic-

⁹⁵Hom. 67. ⁹⁶Hom. 58,48.

⁹⁷Irenaeus A.h. IV.xxxii.2, IV.xxxvi.2.

ularly in the narrative of the creation and fall of man in Genesis 1-3. Man has been created by God to live in obedience to His will. He is by nature capable of good and evil (φύσει δεκτικός ὡν ἀγαθοῦ καὶ πονηροῦ),⁹⁸ but he has yielded to temptation by receiving "the hateful and wanton counsellor," and has disobeyed God.

Death. The consequences of the fall for man are inevitable. First, by his disobedience of God man has brought death upon himself:

Upon every soul Sin set its mark and all alike she devoted to Death. These must die. So all flesh fell into the power of Sin, and every body into the power of Death, and every soul was driven forth from its house of flesh. That which was taken from the earth was resolved into earth, and that which was given of God was shut up in Hades, and there was a breach of the fair joining, and the body was divided; for man was separated into his parts by death. For a new calamity and ruin encompassed him. He was dragged away captive under the shadows of Death, and the image of the soul was dragged away alone.⁹⁹

Man is now a prisoner, αἰχμάλωτος, of Death. It is in conjunction with this passage that we are to read Melito's narrative of "groping Death, a destroying angel, and Hades swallowing up their firstborn" as the troubles which encompassed the Egyptians. The death which destroys the firstborn of the Egyptians is the same death which destroys all mankind.

Rejection. The second consequence of man's fall is his rejection:

Laying hold upon the tree he transgressed the command and disobeyed God. Therefore he was cast out into this world as into a prison of

⁹⁸Hom. 48.

⁹⁹Hom. 51ff. Cf. G. Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: 1933), I.298, 314, III.14. On the conjunction of sin and death in the New Testament see Rom. 5:12, 6:23, 7:13; Jas. 1:15.

the condemned (ἐξεβλήθη εἰς τοῦτον τὸν κόσμον ὡς εἰς δεσμητήριον).¹⁰⁰

There is no conscious echo in this phrase of the proverbial oracle of the Orphic brotherhood, αἶμα τὸ σῆμα .¹⁰¹ The "prison of the condemned" is man's bondage to "the hateful and wanton counsellor," and his captivity to death, sin, and the wrath of God.

The fall of man has been accompanied by his mortality and rejection in the "prison of the condemned." The cause of the fall, however, was man's sinful self-will, and the constant witness to his fall is his bondage to sin, evil desire, and death. The inheritance which Adam has left to his posterity is fornication, corruption, dishonour, slavery, oppression, death, and destruction. Sin has led men into evil and murderous desire. This is the calamity and ruin that encompasses man.¹⁰² The dominant aspect of man's sinfulness and of the penalty which man himself pays for his sinfulness is violence. Man was cast out into this world (ἐξεβλήθη εἰς τοῦτον τὸν κόσμον);¹⁰³ the inheritance which is bequeathed to the children of Adam is destruction (ἀπώλειαν);¹⁰⁴ they were seized by tyrannous sin (ἀνηρπάζοντο ὑπὸ τῆς τυραννικῆς ἁμαρτίας);¹⁰⁵ and sinful man was dragged away captive under the shadows of death (εἵλκετο αἰχμάλωτος ὑπὸ τὰς τοῦ θανάτου

¹⁰⁰Hom. 48.

¹⁰¹The author of the *Axiochus* (365 E) describes man as ζῶον ἀθάνατον ἐν θνητῷ καθειρμένον φρουρίῳ . Cf. Plato, *Phaedo*, 62B, 114B,C; *Cratylus*, 40C.

¹⁰²Hom. 49-56. ¹⁰³Hom. 48. ¹⁰⁴Hom. 49. ¹⁰⁵Hom. 50.

ομίας).¹⁰⁶ Sin for Melito is man's evil will and murderous intent, and sinful man labours and suffers under the oppression and the consequences of his sinfulness. His condition is unnatural bondage, and he cannot make himself free. His master is the devil, whose servant man is.

The Mission of Christ.

Christ's assumption of our fallen humanity. Melito refers frequently in his Homily to the incarnation. In doing so, however, he is concerned about the purpose of the incarnation. Why has Jesus "become flesh"? Eusebius refers to a work of Melito, ὁ περὶ ἐνανθρώπου Θεοῦ

λόγος .¹⁰⁷ This document is regrettably lost to us, but we may assume that Melito's interest in the meaning of the incarnation was strong. The Son of God has become flesh and assumed our fallen humanity in order to save men. This was His mission.

The purpose of the incarnation. References to the incarnation and mission of the Son are thus fairly frequent in the Homily, but we should note that in what he says of the incarnation Melito has in mind, first, the thought that it was the eternal and pre-existent Son who became flesh; and second, the conviction that Christ has taken man's frail humanity to Himself and thereby redeemed it. In the incarnation God "put on man"

¹⁰⁶Hom. 56.

¹⁰⁷Eusebius, H. E. 4.26; see also A. Harnack, Texte und Untersuchungen, 1:1:2, pp. 243, 248.

(θεὸς ἐνδυσσάμενος τὸν ἄνθρωπον).¹⁰⁸ But the One who has thus clothed Himself in our humanity is the "firstborn of God," the One who was begotten before the morning star, made the light rise, parted the darkness, and fixed the first mark for the creation.¹⁰⁹ In this respect Melito has the same understanding of the incarnation as the writer of the Epistle to Diognetus, who, in speaking of the incarnation of the Word, says very much the same thing: "(God) sent the very artificer and craftsman of the universe, by whom He created the heavens, by whom He shut the sea within its bounds."¹¹⁰ At the same time, however, Melito cannot separate the incarnation from its end, viz. the redemption of suffering man. That is, the incarnation is to be interpreted in terms of Christ's passion for sinful man. In the Homily Melito never mentions the incarnation of the Son without also defining it by its goal, viz. the cross:

When He had thus come from heaven to earth (for the sake of) suffering man, and had been (made corporeal) through a virgin, Mary, and (had been betrayed and slain), the tomb received (Him). . . ¹¹¹

This is the lamb that was slain, this is the lamb that was dumb, this is He that was born of Mary the fair ewe, this is He who was (taken) from the flock and dragged to slaughter and (slain at evening) and buried by night.¹¹²

As we have previously stated, Melito only rarely mentions the resurrection in his sermon. But when he does, he also mentions the incarnation of the Son as the first part of the redemptive line which concludes with the

¹⁰⁸Hom. 100. ¹⁰⁹Hom. 82, cf. 83, 96. ¹¹⁰Epistle to Diognetus, 7.

¹¹¹Hom. 66. ¹¹²Hom. 71.

passion and resurrection. Again the incarnation is seen only in connexion with its end:

This is He who was made flesh in a virgin, whose bones were not broken upon the tree, who in burial was not resolved into earth, who arose from the dead and raised man from the grave below to the heights of the heavens.¹¹³

But He arose from the (dead to the heights of the) heavens, God who put on man, and suffered for the sufferer, and was bound for him who was bound, and judged for him who was condemned, and buried for him who was buried.¹¹⁴

Christ has become incarnate in order to take man's fallen humanity to Himself. The firstborn of God has come into the prison of the condemned where man is in bondage to the hateful counsellor, the devil, to sin, evil desire, and death. The cost of this involvement is His death. For a closer understanding of the significance of this expiatory sacrifice we have before us a type, example, or foreshadowing in the Passover, and the sacrifice of the lamb. It is to this, therefore, that Melito turns for his interpretation of Christ's death.

The Death of Christ.

The work of Christ is man's redemption. The cost of this redemption is the death of Christ. And the object of Christ's incarnation and passion is man:

When He had thus come from heaven to earth (for the sake of) suf-

¹¹³Hcm. 70. ¹¹⁴Hcm. 100, cf. 104.

fering man, and had been (made corporeal) through a virgin, Mary, and (had been betrayed and slain), the tomb received Him.¹¹⁵

Melito stresses three aspects of Christ's death: its preparation in the eternal counsels of God; its foreshadowing in the death of the Paschal lamb; and its benefits for man. Let us consider each of these in turn.

Christ's death prepared for. The death of Christ was no accident or thwarting of God's purposes in the sending of His Son to earth. It had been prepared from eternity in the secret counsels of God. Melito is in no doubt that the one who was crucified at Calvary is divine:

Who is slain, and who is it that slayeth? I am ashamed (to tell) and (yet) tell (I must). . . . Hear ye, and tremble before Him who made heaven and earth tremble. He who hung the earth in its place is hanged, He who fixed the heavens is fixed upon the cross, He who made all things fast is made fast upon the tree, the Master has been insulted, God has been murdered, the King of Israel has been slain by an Israelitish hand.¹¹⁶

The Christ to whom is properly ascribed eternal praise has come to ransom man from his ruin and raise him from death to life.¹¹⁷ It is the eternal Son of God who has been brutally put to death,¹¹⁸ but whose expiatory sacrifice has been foreordained, since from all eternity He is both Judge, Word, Grace, Atonement:

Who is all things: in that He judges, Law, in that He teaches, Word, in that He saves, Grace, in that He begets, Father, in that He is begotten, Son, in that He suffers, a sacrificial sheep, in that He is buried, Man, in that He arises, God.¹¹⁹

The death of Christ which has been prepared in the eternal counsels

¹¹⁵Hom. 66. ¹¹⁶Hom. 94-9. ¹¹⁷Hom. 65,70. ¹¹⁸Hom. 82f.

¹¹⁹Hom. 9f.

of God has also been prepared beforehand in "the patriarchs and the prophets and all the people." Abel was slain like Him, Isaac bound like Him, Joseph sold like Him, Moses cast out like Him, David hunted like Him, the prophets dishonoured like Him - all these, together with the Psalmist, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and many prophets have made plain to us the mystery of the Lord.¹²⁰

For Melito, however, the great foreshadowing of Christ in the Old Testament is the Passover. We have already discussed the relationship between the Passover and the death of Christ in regard to typology, and we do not propose to cover this ground again. We shall, however, take this opportunity of discussing Melito's interpretation of Christ as our Passover from certain different aspects.

We have already discussed the sacrifice of the Passover lamb as described in Exod. 12. This lamb was to be "without blemish, a male of the first year." The Passover rite itself was in origin a pastoral or nomadic offering of the firstborn. When the lamb had been taken from the sheep or the goats on the tenth day of the month Abib (later Nisan), it was kept until the fourteenth day and then killed by "the whole assembly off the congregation of Israel" in the evening, i.e. between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. We have also seen how as it developed the Passover became both the feast par excellence of the emancipation of Israel, with a strong eschatological

¹²⁰Hom. 59-65, 69.

character, and the great collective and representative act done on behalf of the people of Israel. We shall now note how these elements recur in Melito's interpretation of the death of Christ.

The unblemished Lamb. Christ is the sinless and unblemished Son (ἀμωμος υἱός), who as the dumb lamb (ἄφωνος ἄμωμος), has been sacrificed for men. As the Passover lamb was taken from the sheep or the goats, so Christ has shared in our common humanity by accepting its frailty in His incarnation. He has thereby redeemed it. Melito thus strongly emphasises in his Homily not only the representative and substitutionary character of Christ's death on the cross, but also our participation in His saving humanity. Christ has not only died in our place, as the lamb of God well-pleasing to the Father: "He suffered for the sufferer, and was bound for him who was bound, and judged for him who was condemned, and buried for him who was buried."¹²¹ He is also in His own humanity our whole salvation. His humanity is pure and unsullied humanity, and in so far as we share in this humanity by union with Him we receive eternal life from God and ourselves become truly human by being delivered from our bondage to sin and death.

The slaying of the Lamb. In the institution of the original Passover, much stress is laid on the blood ceremonial and the deliverance of

¹²¹Hom. 100.

the children of Israel by reason of the mark of the blood. Describing this origin, Melito says that God commanded Moses thus in Egypt: "And ye shall take the (blood) of the sheep and (anoint) the doors of (your) houses, (that the) angel (may be abashed) before the blood." Then, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed and Israel sealed (ὁ Ἰσραὴλ σφραγίζεται), the angel came to smite Egypt, which was "uninitiated in the mystery, having no portion in the Passover, not sealed with the blood, not protected by the Spirit."¹²² But this Passover was merely the type of the passion of the Lord which has now been fulfilled.¹²³ It is true that the sacrifice of the sheep was found to be the salvation of Israel, and the death of the sheep became the life of the people, and that the blood abashed the angel of death. But all this is a foreshadowing of the cross:

Tell me, angel, what stayed thy hand, the sacrifice of the sheep or the life of the Lord? The death of the sheep, or the type of the Lord? The blood of the sheep or the Spirit of the Lord? . . . Thou sawest the mystery of the Lord enacted in the sheep, the life of the Lord in the sacrifice of the sheep, the type of the Lord in the death of the sheep.¹²⁴

Thus, as the sprinkling of the blood delivered Israel from the onslaught of the angel of death, so the death of Christ, the Paschal lamb who is slain for us, is the substitutionary act of deliverance by which we are redeemed from death. Christ is the Son who has come in place of the lamb, the Man in place of the sheep.¹²⁵ He is the One who has come to suffer with suffering mankind and to heal.¹²⁶

¹²²Hom. 14ff. ¹²³Hom. 58. ¹²⁴Hom. 31ff. ¹²⁵Hom. 5.

¹²⁶Hom. 46f.

The redemptive act. It was a characteristic of the Passover as it developed in Israel that this rite was interpreted as the festival par excellence of the emancipation of Israel, at once a commemoration of a past act and an earnest of the coming great act by which God would redeem and finally establish His chosen people in His covenant. In this regard again Melito sees the death of Christ as constituting the fulfilment of its type. As Israel was in bondage in Egypt, so man, "Adam," has by his sin fallen into the bondage of fornication, corruption, dishonour, slavery, oppression, death, and destruction.¹²⁷ Man is no longer himself. He is degraded and captive man. Satan, the "hateful and wanton counsellor," is now his lord. Melito represents the human condition in terms of its inhumanity and unnaturalness. Sin, evil desire, ^ainstiable [^]pleasure, lewdness, lust, svarice, murder, homosexuality, incest, and bloodshed mark man in his fall, and stand as the evident proof of his frailty. With sin, however, goes sin's co-worker, death, and the two, in fiendish cooperation, mark man and drag him into captivity.

But it is from this bondage that Christ has emancipated man:

For led as a lamb and slaughtered as a sheep, He ransomed us from the ruin of the world as from the land of Egypt, and freed us from the slavery of the devil as from the hand of Pharaoh, and sealed our souls with His own spirit and the members of our bodies with His blood.¹²⁸

"This is He who clothed Death with a garment of shame and bound the devil in anguish as Moses bound Pharaoh."¹²⁹ Christ has come to heal the lame,

¹²⁷Hom. 49. ¹²⁸Hom. 67. ¹²⁹Hom. 68.

cleanse the lepers, give sight to the blind, and raise the dead."¹³⁰

He is the One who can say:

Come hither all ye families of men, who are sullied with sins, and receive remission of sins. For I am your remission, I am the Pass-over of salvation, the lamb that was sacrificed for you, I am your ransom, I am your light, I am your saviour, I am the resurrection, I am your king, I will lead you up to the heights of the heavens, I will show you the Father who is from the ages, I will raise you up by my right hand.¹³¹

There is a strong note of eschatological fulfilment in Melito.

Jesus Christ is the end and fulfilment of the redemption which was foreshadowed in the Passover: "Therefore the slaying of the sheep and the sending of the lamb and the writing of the Law have issued in Christ Jesus."¹³² In comparison with the salvation achieved by Christ all that has gone before it, pointed to it, or prefigured it, is of no worth at all.¹³³ The plan of the mystery of our redemption is now unfolded.

The Benefits of Christ's Death.

In his theology of the death of Christ Melito speaks frequently of the benefits which Christ's passion has procured for men. We have already touched on the fringes of this subject, and shall now deal with it more deeply.

Victory over sin. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer who has broken the power of sin and unrighteousness:

This is He who smote iniquity, and made unrighteousness barren as

¹³⁰Hom. 72. ¹³¹Hom. 103. ¹³²Hom. 6. ¹³³Hom. 43f.

Moses made Egypt. This is He who rescued us from slavery to freedom, from darkness to light, from death to life, from oppression to an eternal kingdom, and made us a new priesthood and a chosen people for ever.¹³⁴

There is a notable difference in the interpretation of the death of Christ at this point between Melito and Irenaeus. For Irenaeus sin may be said to be the "ethical" consequence of Adam's fall, as death is the "physical." Fallen man has become less than man, and has lost the capacity to grow as the child of God in creation. He has fallen victim to the Tempter, and is incapable, by reason of his fallen humanity, to resist the continued temptations of his daily life and oppose the Tempter. But Christ wins victory for fallen man precisely in His earthly incarnate life, i.e. in His actual humanity. Christ is truly man, born of the Virgin, and therefore connected in His humanity with Adam, who was taken from the virgin soil and made a living soul. In the birth, of Christ, that is, there is a definite similarity to Adam's own coming into existence. When, therefore, Jesus confronts the Tempter in the wilderness, He stands in Adam's humanity, but He does not yield to the temptation, as Adam before Him had done. For once man, true man, resists the temptation to follow the Tempter, and for Irenaeus the ethical victory of Christ over sin in the Temptation is comparable to His victory over man's physical enemy, death,

¹³⁴Hom. 68.

at Calvary.¹³⁵

Thus for Irenaeus the essential factor in Christ's victory over sin is His humanity. For Melito, on the other hand, while the attribute of humanity is not unimportant, the essential factor is His passion. He is the slain, dumb lamb, dragged from the flock to His slaughter. As it were, when Irenaeus looked at Christ he saw Adam, the eschatological Adam; but when Melito looked, he saw the Johannine Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is fundamentally the difference between the two in regard to Christ's victory over sin. For Melito Christ has procured victory for man over sin by passion - by His passive submission to the hostile onset of sin. The whole of the Homily echoes this dominant note.

Victory over death. Christ has slain the man-slayer, Death. This is the Gospel for Melito: "This is He who clothed Death with a garment of shame and bound the devil in anguish as Moses bound Pharaoh."¹³⁶ The theory of the atonement which we find in the Homily could be stated in the simplest terms: The death of Christ is the salvation of the people. To understand this more fully, however, we are to see that here as elsewhere Melito states his doctrine of Christ in terms of His fulfilment of the Paschal sacrifice. The lamb without flaw or blemish which was to be sacri-

¹³⁵See the masterly discussion in Gustaf Wingren, Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus (Edinburgh: 1959), 96ff., 118-21.

¹³⁶Hom. 67f.

ficed in the Passover ritual "protects" the people and abashed the angel of Death. This idea of "protection by the blood" is characteristic of the Homily. It is because Israel is "sealed" by the blood (ὁ Ἰσραὴλ σφραγίζεται), while Egypt is uninitiated in the mystery, not sealed with the blood, and not protected by the Spirit (ἀμύητον τοῦ μυστηρίου, ἀσφραγίστον τοῦ αἵματος, ἀφρούρητον τοῦ πνεύματος), that the people of God is guarded against the onset of death.¹³⁷ The sacrifice of the sheep proved to be the salvation of the people. But all this is "the mystery of the Lord enacted in the sheep."¹³⁸ The death of the sheep is a type of the death of the Lord.

Thus the death of Christ proves to be the life "of the people." But which people? It is "man, cast out into this world as into a prison of the condemned," that is defended by Christ from death. For it was Adam, man, who brought upon himself slavery, oppression, death, and destruction because of his transgression of God's commands. Man was "dragged away captive under the shadows of death."¹³⁹ But Christ has died, and defeated death, fulfilling the type of the Paschal lamb: "Once the sacrifice of the sheep was held in honour; now it is worthless because of the life of the Lord."¹⁴⁰ By His death Christ also removes the terror from death, and Melito's vivid picture of the Egyptian child confronted by death in panic fear represents the deliverance from the fear of death which Christ's death

¹³⁷Hom. 16. ¹³⁸Hom. 33. ¹³⁹Hom. 56. ¹⁴⁰Hom. 44.

has secured: "Some firstborn child, grasping a dark form in his arms, and terrified in his soul, cried out piteously and fearfully, 'Whom does my hand grasp? Before whom does my soul tremble?'"¹⁴¹ But Christ has died to protect men from death, and to remove this fear.

Melito, as is appropriate in a Paschal Homily, has much to say about the necessity of Christ's death and His physical sufferings. The aspect of the necessity of Christ's death - "He must needs suffer He must needs be dishonoured He must needs be judged. . . . He must needs be hanged upon the cross" - echoes the very words of Jesus in the Gospels: "The Son of man must suffer many things."¹⁴² The Homily is particularly concerned to stress the actual physical sufferings of Christ. He suffers at the hands of the Gentiles, is judged by the uncircumcised, and nailed to the cross by the oppressor's hand. He endures scourgings, pain, thirst, hunger, and punishment. He has a scarlet robe put on His body and thorns on His head. His hands are bound and His mouth fed with gall. Each episode of His sufferings is mentioned in turn, and Melito drives home again and again the agony and pain of Christ's sacrifice.¹⁴³

We find here again a notable difference between Melito and Irenaeus in their interpretation of the Cross and Christ's victory over death. For Melito the One who suffers is God - "He who hung the earth in its place is

¹⁴¹Hom. 24. ¹⁴²Mark 8:31 and parallels; Hom. 75.

¹⁴³Hom. 76, 79f., 86, 90, 94, 100.

hanged, He who fixed the heavens is fixed upon the cross."¹⁴⁴ This is the note we hear all through the Homily. In the polemical section against the Jews Israel is stated to have been responsible for crucifying Christ because it did not recognise its Creator:

But thou wast not Israel, for thou didst not see God, thou didst not perceive the Lord; thou knewest not, O Israel, that this is the firstborn of God, this is He who was begotten before the morning star, who made the light to rise."¹⁴⁵

Christ is the Creator of the Cosmos - and yet He has been crucified:

ὁ στήριξας τὰ πάντα ἐπὶ ξύλου ἐστήρικται.

In Irenaeus, on the other hand, when Christ suffers on the Cross He suffers in our humanity. Irenaeus cannot think of the death of Christ apart from the humanity of the One who suffers there. Christ has undergone every human experience and circumstance.¹⁴⁶ When He dies on the cross, He dies as man, otherwise He would not have had the power to release man from his bondage to death. But the humanity which He bore on the cross is perfect, unsullied humanity - not the fallen humanity of Adam - and precisely in this way is the fallen humanity of Adam renewed and recapitulated.¹⁴⁷ Thus when he speaks of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, Irenaeus

¹⁴⁴Hom. 96.

¹⁴⁵Hom. 82; cf. 77. Melito apparently understands the etymology of the name Israel as "he who sees God." The same error appears in Philo, De 17/17 nom. 81, Hippolytus, Comm. in Gen. fr. 16. Cf. Fr. 14 of Melito, "He was nailed upon the tree, and yet was upholding everything."

¹⁴⁶Irenaeus, A.h. II.xcii.3-6; Cf. Proof, 74.

¹⁴⁷Irenaeus, A.h. V.xiv.2-3 (Stier. ibid.).

sees this as the victory of the Redeemer over man's physical enemy, death. Creation has been purified, and man given the capacity to "grow" again. As it was only by entering into Adam's frail humanity that Christ could restore that humanity, so it is by the resurrection of Christ that Adam's fallen humanity is delivered from its bondage to death: "The triumph of the resurrection over man's enemy, death, is a revelation of the pure humanity which has been achieved through God's becoming man."¹⁴⁸

In Melito, however, we find a different explanation of Christ's victory in the resurrection. The One who arose from the dead speaks thus: "I am the Christ, I am He who put down death, and triumphed over the enemy, and trod upon Hades, and bound the strong one and brought man safely home to the heights of the heavens."¹⁴⁹ Christ defeats the power of death because He is the Son of God. The Victor over death is He "who fixed the first mark for the creation, who hung the earth in its place, who dried up the abyss, who spread out the firmament, who brought order to the world."¹⁵⁰ Where Irenaeus stresses the humanity of the Crucified, Melito stresses His divinity.

Deliverance from the devil. For Melito human life is set under the tyranny of the oppressor, the devil. Man's condition is unnatural bondage to the "hateful and wanton counsellor." Several of the words which Melito uses in the Homily stress this subjection to an alien lord vividly. Man

¹⁴⁸Wingren, Man and the Incarnation, p. 128; Cf. A.h. V.xx1.1; Proof, 31,33.

¹⁴⁹Hom. 102. ¹⁵⁰Hom. 82.

is a prisoner (αἰχμάλωτος), of death. In his sinful separation from God he is victim to groping death, the destroying angel, and Hades swallowing up his firstborn.

The consequences of Adam's fall are true of all men: "Laying hold upon the tree he transgressed the command and disobeyed God. Therefore he was cast out into this world as into a prison of the condemned."¹⁵¹ The imprisonment which now holds man bound is his position of thralldom and bondage to the devil and captivity to death, sin, and the wrath of God. The calamity and ruin that encompasses him is fornication, corruption, dishonour, slavery, oppression, death, and destruction. Sin is a tyrant which has taken man forceably under its control:

For these woes befell them; they were seized by tyrannous sin and led into turmoils of desires, in which they were buffeted about by insatiable pleasures, by adultery, by fornication, by lewdness, by lust, by avarice, by murders, by bloodshed, by oppression wicked and lawless.¹⁵²

Melito makes the firstborn child of the Egyptians cry out, "Whom does my hand grasp, before whom does my soul tremble? Who is it that encompasses my whole body in the dark?" In this cry of fear mankind is crying out. Death and sin are the pitiless oppressors of man. It is of some interest to note the reply that is given in the Homily to the Egyptian child's question. The object which he grasps, of course, is death, and death replies: "I am firstborn Law; I am thy destiny, the silence of death."¹⁵³ It seems to be fairly clear what Melito is saying. His idea of death as

¹⁵¹Hom. 48.

¹⁵²Hom. 50.

¹⁵³Hom. 25.

the first law of human nature is probably based on two Biblical passages. In Genesis death is interpreted aetiologically as the consequence of man's disobedience of the command of God: "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."¹⁵⁴ Melito clearly has this passage in mind in his mention of Adam, the firstborn. God, he says, "made known to him all His laws by the commandment 'from every tree in the garden shall ye eat, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil shall ye not eat; and on the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die.'"¹⁵⁵ But man transgressed this command, and for his sin he was cast out into the prison of the condemned.

The other passage which Melito seems to have had in mind at this point is in Romans: "For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the Law of sin and of death."¹⁵⁶ But Melito has little more to say about the Law than this. In Irenaeus, on the other hand, the Law has a place of fundamental importance. It has been given for men in their condition of bondage to bring them into compulsory obedience to God's will. The Law is one expression of the dominion which God continues to exercise even over refractory man. This interpretation of the Law is not found in the Homily, and yet the idea is not, as we have seen, wholly absent. Man has been created by God to live in full, unimpeded and voluntarily given

¹⁵⁴Gen. 3:19. ¹⁵⁵Hom. 47. ¹⁵⁶Rom. 8:2.

obedience to the will of his Father. This will is inherent in the relationship between the Creator and man. With the Fall the free relationship between Creator and man becomes altered, yet man is still bound to God, though his obedience to God is now given to the hateful counsellor, and though God's will has taken on the hard aspect of death. Even in man's sinful separation from God, however, and before the coming of the Redeemer, he lives in hope of deliverance: "For that which is to be new and mighty prepares beforehand the works of faith, being seen before from afar."¹⁵⁷ Christ is to be seen in the typical bondage and rejection of the prophets and patriarchs who have predated Him:

Therefore if you wish to see the mystery of the Lord, look at Abel who was slain like Him, at Isaac who was bound like Him, at Joseph who was sold like Him, at Moses who was cast out like Him, at David who was hunted like Him, at the prophets who in like manner suffered for Christ's sake.¹⁵⁸

The good news of the Gospel for Melito is that Christ has delivered men from this bondage and the power of the Devil.

For led as a lamb and slaughtered as a sheep, He ransomed us from the ruin of the world as from the land of Egypt, and freed us from the slavery of the devil as from the hand of Pharaoh (ὡς πρόβατον σφαγείς ἐλυτρώσατο ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ἀπωλείας ὡς ἐκ τῆς Αἰγύπτου, καὶ ἔλυσεν ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς τοῦ διαβόλου δουλείας ὡς ἐκ χειρὸς Φαραώ).¹⁵⁹

Significantly, Melito uses the same language and idea as we find in Exodus in regard to the deliverance from Egypt by the mighty act of God. In the

¹⁵⁷Hom. 57. ¹⁵⁸Hom. 59. ¹⁵⁹Hom. 67.

Septuagint we read,

Ἐγὼ Κύριος, καὶ ἐξάξω ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς δυναστείας τῶν Αἰγυπτίων,
καὶ ῥύσομαι ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῆς δουλείας, καὶ λυτρώσομαι ὑμᾶς ἐν βραχίονι
ὑψηλῷ καὶ κρίσει μεγάλῃ· καὶ λήψομαι ἑμαυτῷ ὑμᾶς λαὸν ἑμοί, καὶ
ἔσομαι ὑμῶν θεός, καὶ γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ Κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν ὁ ἐξαγαγὼν
ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῆς καταδυναστείας τῶν Αἰγυπτίων .160

Christ has bound the devil in anguish as Moses bound Pharaoh.

The similarity at this point between Melito and the Septuagint becomes even clearer further on:

This is He who rescued us from slavery to freedom, from darkness to light, from death to life, from oppression to an eternal kingdom, and made us a new priesthood and a chosen people for ever, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ῥυσάμενος ἡμᾶς ἐκ δουλείας εἰς ἐλευθερίαν, ἐκ σκότους εἰς φῶς, ἐκ θανάτου εἰς ζωὴν, ἐκ τυραννίδος εἰς βασιλείαν αἰώνιον καὶ ποιήσας ἡμᾶς ἱεράτευμα καὶ λαὸν περιούσιον αἰώνιον .161

Christ has bound the strong man and delivered his victim. Man is now freed from his bondage, and can escape from the clutches of the oppressor, as Israel of old escaped from Pharaoh. For Israel the pledge of its deliverance was the Paschal lamb. For the man who hears the Gospel the pledge of salvation is Jesus Christ, the Passover lamb who is slain for us.

Salvation through the death of Christ. It is surprising that there is no mention of the Sacraments in the Homily. For Paul both baptism and the Lord's Supper were to be interpreted in terms of the death of Christ. What we do find, however, is the idea of being sealed by the Spirit of Christ.

160 Exod. 6:6. 161 Hom. 68.

Sin has set its mark on every man and devoted all alike to death.¹⁶² But among God's people in Egypt another mark was set, with a different consequence: "But Israel was guarded by the sacrifice of the sheep, and was baptised by the shed blood, and the death of the sheep was found to be the stronghold of the people." All this, however, was an enactment or representation of the mystery of the Lord, for in the death of the Lord we have the fulfilment of what was typologically displayed in the death of the Paschal lamb. Salvation for those who hear the Gospel is through the shed blood of Christ, and those who are marked or sealed with this mark are immune from the onset of death and sin. Death has marked men for itself, but Christ has "sealed our souls with His own spirit and the members of our bodies with His own blood."¹⁶³ The death of Christ makes available for all men the baptism of the shed blood. Thus at least implicitly in Melito we have the Pauline doctrine of baptism into the death of Christ:

Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.¹⁶⁴

This verse of Paul's has to be understood against the liturgical background which it presupposes. In baptism those who were to be baptised removed their clothes, renounced their former way of life, and plunged into the water. In this act they signified their burial with Christ. Their ascent from the water in which they were baptised signified their resurrection

¹⁶²Hom. 54. ¹⁶³Hom. 67. ¹⁶⁴Rom. 6:3f.

to newness of life in Christ, as a token of which they put on a white garment. This interpretation of the meaning of baptism is commonly found in ante-Nicene and Nicene theology. Baptism was held to be a sharing in the death and resurrection of Christ. The mention of the "sealing" of believers by Christ's Spirit in Melito, ἑσφράγισεν ἡμῶν τὰς ψυχὰς τῷ ἰδίῳ πνεύματι καὶ τὰ μέλη τοῦ σώματος τῷ ἰδίῳ αἵματι, inevitably reminds us of the use of σφράγις in the New Testament, where the seal or brand-mark of Christ's servants is baptism, the divinely appointed sign of the membership of the believer in the new Covenant.¹⁶⁵ To be baptised by the blood of Jesus Christ is to be delivered from captivity through the death of the Lamb. It is to be restored to the heights of heaven, and to see again the Father who is from everlasting to everlasting.

¹⁶⁵See Interim Report of the Special Commission on Baptism (Church of Scotland) May 1955, p. 37ff.; May 1956, p. 32; on Baptism in the New Testament as σφράγις see Alan Richardson, Introduction, pp. 350-5; G. W. H. Lampe, The Seal of the Spirit (New York: 1951), passim; and cf. II Clem. 6:9, 7:6, 8:6, where "keeping the seal unstained" seems to be synonymous with "keeping baptism pure and undefiled."

CHAPTER III

THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

I. WAS THE AUTHOR OF THE SHEPHERD A CHRISTIAN?

Statement of the Problem.

The Shepherd of Hermas was widely regarded in the early Church as possessing the authority of holy scripture.¹ Tertullian, however, though at first disposed to accept it as scripture,² later questioned its authenticity as a Christian document. It had, he alleged, "been judged apocryphal and spurious by every council of churches."³ The outlook of Hermas has been described by a modern commentator as "not very Christian," and there has been considerable debate whether his writings can be accepted as genuinely Christian works.⁴ Hermas himself, however, implies that he had been baptised, and if the Fragmentum Muratorianum is correct in identifying the author of the Shepherd as the brother of Pius, Bishop of Rome (139 -

¹Irenaeus, A.h. IV.xx.2; Origen, Commentary on Matthew 14:21, Peri Archon IV.11. The Fragmentum Muratorianum said that it might be read but not preached in church, Ep. 268.73.

²de Oratione 16. ³de Pudicitia 16.

⁴T. F. Torrance, The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers (Edinburgh: 1948), p. 112; Cf. H. Schulz, Spuren heidnischer Vorlagen in Hirten des Hermas (n.p.: 1913).

45 A.D.), this would mean that he has probably been baptised in the Church at Rome.⁵

More recently F. Spitta has suggested that this work represents a Jewish apocalypse dating to an early period of the Christian era, and that its few Christological overtones were intended to make it acceptable to the Christian community in which it was read.⁶ The same point is made in an article by Jean-Pierre Audet,⁷ namely, that in the course of transmission, "la tendance . . . a été de 'christianiser' la théologie du Pasteur, et, inversement, d'obscurcir ses attaches originelles au judaïsme." The authenticity of the Shepherd was also questioned by Adolf Hilgenfeld: "Judaeus genere fuisse neque fidei christianae deditus Iudaismum deseruisse videtur."⁸ It will first be necessary, therefore, to attempt to establish whether or not Hermas was a Christian and to determine the character of the Shepherd. Is it an apocryphal Jewish apocalypse? Or is it a genuine Christian document? If the author is not a Christian theologian, or, at any rate, if he was not attempting to write a document for the edification of the Christian Church, we have obviously little interest in anything that

⁵Mand. 4.3.1., Fragm. Murat. 73f. (ed. Gwatkin).

⁶Friedrich Spitta, "Studien zum Hirten des Hermas," in Geschichte und Litteratur des Urchristentums (n.p.: n.d.), Vol. II, pp. 243ff.

⁷Jean-Pierre Audet, "Affinités littéraires et doctrinales du Manuel de discipline," hereafter cited as "Affinités," in Revue Biblique (Paris: 1953), No. I, pp. 41-82.

⁸A. Hilgenfeld, Hermas Pastor, (Leipzig: 1861).

he may appear to say about the passion of Christ. It will be necessary to settle these questions before attempting to analyse his Christology.

The argument against accepting the Shepherd of Hermas as a genuine Christian document rests on three major objections. Let us consider each in detail.

The use of κύριος . In the Gebhardt text of the Shepherd the word κύριος appears 222 times. In 9 cases the word is used in a general sense, and there is one doubtful case. Having examined the meaning of each of the remaining 212 uses of the word, J.-P. Audet claims that not once is the title κύριος applied to Christ.⁹ Further, in no instance is Christ ever named the Son of God, or referred to by the title κύριος as one of the persons of the Godhead. Even granting that Hermas wrote in a period in which the doctrine of the Trinity was not yet clearly defined, it is curious that he should use the name ὁ πατήρ of the Father only once, and then in a Platonic sense.¹⁰ For Hermas ὁ πατήρ is not defined by His relationship to the Son or by His gracious adoption of sinners as sons through His gift of the Spirit - the customary definition of the New Testament writers - but by His creation of the "holy Church" before the foundation of the world, and His subordination of all things to it.¹¹

A study of variant readings in the textus receptus is also illumi-

⁹J.-P. Audet, "Affinites," p. 41f.

¹⁰Sim. 9:12:2. ¹¹Vis. 1:1:6, 1:3:4.

nating, and apparently confirms J.-P. Audet's argument that "la tendance de la transmission a été de 'christianiser' la théologie du Pasteur." In 32 cases out of the 212 clear uses of κύριος the word has been altered in the manuscripts to θεός, in 3 cases to Χριστός, and in one to υἱός τοῦ Θεοῦ. Is this editorial interpolation in the interests of Christian theology? For Greek-speaking Jews κύριος was the customary designation of the Lord God of Israel. In his Vision of the building of the Tower Hermas appears to refer to Christian baptism. The Old Woman seen in the vision explains the meaning of the stones thrown away from the Tower:

Do you wish to know who are the others which are falling near the water and cannot be rolled into the water? 'These are they who have heard the Word' and wish to be baptised 'in the name of the Lord' (βαπτισθῆναι εἰς τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου).¹²

Commenting on this passage, Lebreton suggests that Hermas is merely using a stereotyped liturgical formula without implying any Christian content.¹³

In the Alexandrine versions of the Old Testament the phrase τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου occurs 110 times, always without the article, as the translation of יהוה .¹⁴ The "name of the Lord" is, of course, the Tetragrammaton, which, under the influence of the Third Commandment and later Jewish piety,

¹²Vis. 3:7:3.

¹³Jules Lebreton, Histoire du Dogme de la Trinité (Paris: 1928), Vol. II, p. 354, n.1. Hermas, says Lebreton, used "une citation des Actes ou. . . une formule déjà consacrée."

¹⁴T. W. N. T., Vol. III, κύριος. T. C. Vriezen, Outline of Old Testament Theology (Oxford: 1958), p. 194.

was not pronounced in full. The word Y J 7 X was used in later times for the Tetragrammaton, and the Greek versions of the Old Testament regularly translate it by κύριος. At any rate, the suggestion is made by J.-P. Audet and others that κύριος refers primarily and indeed solely to the sacred name of JHVH. It is only with Polycarp, Fr. Audet avers, that we find the phrase τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου used in reference to Christ.¹⁵ In the faith and theology of Hermas "Lord" is never Christ Jesus the Lord of the apostolic message and tradition, but JHVH of the Jewish scriptures. The Shepherd, it is maintained, is a second century Jewish apocalypse, composed over a period, and circulated among the Diaspora Jews in Rome, but later adapted to and edited in the interests of Christian apology.¹⁶

The Holy Spirit. If the use of the word κύριος in the Shepherd throws severe doubts on its Christian origin, so too does the doctrine of the Spirit which we find in it. In Hermas there are two principal interpretations of the Spirit which requires serious examination, for they call in question the assumed intention of the author to compose a work of Christian content.

In the first place the Spirit in the Shepherd tends to be regarded as an impersonal, indwelling power (δύναμις)¹⁷ which lacks the personality and the divine nature of the Spirit declared in the apostolic

¹⁵J.-P. Audet, "Affinités," p. 52f. ¹⁶Cf. Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁷Mand. 11:2.

writings. The Holy Spirit which dwells in a man is delicate (τρυφερόν), and

if any ill temper enter, at once the Holy Spirit, which is delicate, is oppressed, finding the place impure, and seeks to depart out of the place, for it is choked by the evil spirit, having no room to serve the Lord as it will but is contaminated by the bitterness.¹⁸

When the Holy Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον) dwells in a man, it excludes evil spirits, but this Spirit is delicate, and will depart from a man who has an evil spirit (πονηρὸν πνεῦμα).¹⁹ The false prophet lacks the Divine Spirit (πνεῦμα θεῶν), and makes empty answers to empty men. But every spirit which is given from God has the power of the Godhead (τὴν δύναμιν τῆς θεότητος), because it is from above, from the power of the Divine Spirit (ἀπὸ τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ θεοῦ πνεύματος).²⁰ The man who has the Divine Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ θεῶν) can be tested by his life - his meekness and humility - and speaks not by himself but only when God wishes him to speak.²¹

The idea of the Spirit being "defiled" (μιλαινόμενον)²² and "serving" God in the body of the man whom it possesses is part of the unsettled doctrine of the Trinity which we find in Hermas. His theology is "an amalgam of binitarianism and adoptionism,"²³ and there is no evidence in the Shepherd that Hermas thought of the Holy Spirit as the proper object of worship with the Father and the Son. In the Parable of the master and

¹⁸Mand. 11:2. ¹⁹Mand. 5:2:5f. ²⁰Mand. 11:2-6.

²¹Mand. 11:7-10. ²²Mand. 5:1:3.

²³J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, (London: 1958), p. 94.

the vineyard the master entrusts his vineyard during his absence to his servant, who so faithfully cares for the vineyard that after his return the master calls his son and makes the servant joint heir with the son.²⁴ The angel explains to Hermas that the vineyard is the world, the master is the Creator, "he who created everything," and the servant the Son of God. The "beloved son" referred to in the Parable is presumably the Spirit. In the following chapter, however, Hermas appears to modify and augment what he has just said about the Son of God.

The pre-existent Holy Spirit, which created all creation, did God make to dwell in the flesh which He willed. Therefore this flesh in which the Holy Spirit dwelled, served the Spirit well, walking in holiness and purity, and did not in any way defile the Spirit (μηδὲν ὁλως μιάνασα τὸ πνεῦμα). When, therefore, it had lived nobly and purely, and had laboured with the Spirit, and worked with it in every deed, behaving with power and bravery, He chose it as companion with the Holy Spirit; for the conduct of this flesh pleased Him, because it was not defiled while it was bearing the Holy Spirit on earth.²⁵

The meaning appears to be that the flesh in which the Spirit dwelt in the Incarnation so pleased God that He exalted the servant to be for the future His companion with the Spirit. The interesting point is the reference to the Spirit in this passage as "the pre-existent Holy Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ προόν) which created all creation" (τὸ κτίσεν πᾶσαν τὴν κτίσιν).²⁶ The obvious reference is Gen. 1:2, but it may be thought strange, particularly in view of the powerful Logos Christology of the second century, that Hermas ascribed creation to the Spirit rather than to the Word of God.

²⁴Sim. 5:5, cf. 5:2. ²⁵Sim. 5:6:5f. ²⁶Sim. 5:6:5.

Those who argue that the Shepherd is not a Christian work also refer to the apparent influence upon it of Wisdom theology. The Wisdom Literature had from an early stage hypostatized Wisdom as God's "master workman" in the creation of the world.²⁷ In the first century A. D. Wisdom was held to be the "worker of all things" (ἡ πάντων τεχνίτις), who "in all ages entering into holy souls . . . maketh them friends of God and prophets."²⁸ It is argued by J.-P. Audet that in the Shepherd the Spirit comes to occupy the place of Wisdom in the Wisdom Literature.²⁹ The description of Wisdom in the passage from the Wisdom of Solomon to which we have just referred has certain resemblances to the description of the Spirit which we find in Hermas. But while first century Wisdom theology established a connexion with the Hellenistic doctrine of the Logos rather than with the Wisdom-conception of Gnostic mythology, the pneumatology of the Shepherd has a different affinity, as we shall see in examining the Shepherd's doctrine of the "spirits." Some spirits are earthly, e.g. double-mindedness (διψυχία), and are from the Devil.³⁰ There are other spirits, e.g. truth (ἀλήθεια), which proceed from God.³¹ There is also a prophetic spirit.³² The Holy Spirit itself can be obscured (ἐπισκοτούμενον).³³ For Hermas the origin

²⁷Prov. 8:22-31, Eccles. 24: 1-34. ²⁸Wisd. 7:22,27.

²⁹J.-P. Audet, "Affinités," p. 60-4. ³⁰Mand. 9:11.

³¹Mand. 3:1. ³²Mand. 9:9. ³³Mand. 5:1:2.

of sin is the influence of the evil desire in a man's heart and human life is lived out in the interaction between the good and evil spirits in his life.³⁴

It is in this light that we have to examine the idea of repentance which is emphasised by Hermas. There seems to have been a strongly held view in the second century Church, based on the teaching of Heb. 6:4ff., and I John 5:6 that there was no possibility of repentance for sins committed after baptism. Hermas is acquainted with this teaching and quotes it: "I have heard, sir, that there is no second repentance beyond the one given when we went down into the water and received remission of our former sins."³⁵ What is new in Hermas is the affirmation that the exceptional circumstances of imminent persecution and the passing away of the present age admit the possibility of a second *μετάνοια*. The angel shows Hermas the shepherd of punishment receiving those who have wandered away from God and walked "in the lusts and deceits of this world," and punishing them as they deserve:

When, therefore, they have been afflicted with every affliction, then they are handed over to me, for good instruction (*εἰς ἀγαθὴν παιδείαν*), and are made strong in the faith of the Lord And if they repent, then it enters into their hearts, that the deeds which they did were evil . . . and for the future they serve the Lord with a pure heart, and they prosper in all their deeds.³⁶

In a later parable in the context of the building of the Tower (= the upbuilding of the Church) Hermas is told,

³⁴Mand. 12:1. ³⁵Mand. 4:3:1. ³⁶Sim. 6:3:6.

For these, then, who became double-minded because of their deeds there is still repentance, but their repentance must be speedy that their dwelling may be within the tower. But for those who do not repent, but remain in their pleasures, death is near.³⁷

Hermas thus grants the possibility that persecution and the approaching end of the age offer a second opportunity of repentance. This repentance extends to all without reference to the nature of the sin. There is no reference in Hermas, such as we find in Tertullian,³⁸ to the three unpardonable sins of apostasy, adultery, and homicide. If, however, a man sins after a second repentance, there can be no possibility of remission.³⁹

The Rule of the Essene Community at Qumran (IQ S, formerly designated the Manual of Discipline) gives us a fairly clear picture of the life and doctrine of an eschatological community which had a strong influence on the early Church. There are many points of similarity between the teaching of the Community and Christian doctrine. Both are strongly eschatological. Both anticipate the early return of the Messiah (though with significant differences: for the early Church the Messiah had already come, for the Community there were to be two Messiahs, still to come). Both expect the final struggle in which God's purpose would triumph over His enemies.⁴⁰

³⁷Sim. 8:9:4.

³⁸de Pudicitia, 19; Cf. adv. Marcionem 4.9. ³⁹Mand. 4:3:6.

⁴⁰On the relationship between the teachings of the Community and the New Testament see R. E. Murphy, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and New Testament Comparisons," in Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. XVIII, 1956, pp. 263ff.;; F. Nötscher, Zur Theologischen Terminologie der Qumran-Texte (Bonn: 1956); K. Stendahl (ed.), The Scrolls and the New Testament (London: 1958); F. M. Cross, Jr., The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies (New York: 1958).

There is a sufficient number of resemblances between the Rule of Qumran and the Shepherd to justify a brief examination of these points of correspondence. The Rule looks forward to the end of the world and the day of God's vengeance.⁴¹ In contrast with the early Christian belief that the Messiah had already come, the purpose of the Essene document was to reassure the Community that the Messianic Age was at hand. At this time God, assisted by the godly, will put an end to evil and sin and recreate the world.⁴² In the meantime the Essenes are living in a transitional age which is marked by an enduring battle between the spirits of wickedness or darkness and the spirits of truth or light.⁴³ The devil has caused the godly to go astray by these wicked spirits.⁴⁴ But the Messianic Age is at hand. The expectation of the Community was in fact for two Messiahs, the Messiah of Aaron and the Messiah of Israel⁴⁵ of whom the former is to be the expounder, interpreter, and promulgator of the Law (dores hattorah). The godly will live in the light of heaven and in the New Jerusalem, while the ungodly will suffer the pains of hell for ever.⁴⁶ In the present life the Rule stresses the necessity of true repentance. The teacher of Righteousness teaches his Community how to prepare themselves by repentance for the purpose of receiving the forgiveness of sins,⁴⁷ and being able to live in the life of the New Israel.

⁴¹IQ S 1:11; 2:9,15; 4:12; 5:12; 9:23. ⁴²IQ S 8:6; 4:25.

⁴³IQ S 3:13-4:1. ⁴⁴IQ S 1:23f.; 3:23f. ⁴⁵IQ S 14:9.

⁴⁶IQ S 4:6ff., 11. ⁴⁷IQ S 3:4ff.; 8:3ff.; 9:5.

The Messianism of the Shepherd and the Rule corresponds closely at one interesting point. In the fifth Parable the mission of the Son of God is defined in the following way.

He Himself cleansed their sins, labouring much and undergoing much toil. For no vineyard can be dug without toil or labour. When, therefore, He had cleansed the sins of the people, He showed them the ways of life, and gave them the Law which He 'received from His Father.'

God has therefore made the Holy Spirit dwell in His Son, who

served the Spirit well, walking in holiness and purity, and did not in any way defile the Spirit. When, therefore, it (sc. the flesh in which the Holy Spirit dwelled) had lived nobly and purely, and had laboured with the Spirit, and worked with it in every deed, behaving with power and bravery, He (sc. the Lord) chose it as companion with the Holy Spirit; for the conduct of this flesh pleased Him, because it was not defiled while it was bearing the Holy Spirit on earth.⁴⁸

In the Rule the Servant motif is taken up in the following way.

God, in His mysterious wisdom and His glorious prudence, has put down a limited time for the existence of deceit. At the time fixed for visitation He will destroy it for ever, and then the truth of the earth will appear for ever, for it has polluted itself by the ways of ungodliness during the ascendancy of deceit until the time when it has been decided for judgment. Then God will purify⁴⁹ all the doings of man (gbr) by His truth and purge a part of mankind (mbny 'ysh). He will utterly destroy the spirit of deceit from them and clean His flesh (sc. the Servant's)⁵⁰ by a holy spirit from all ungodly acts. He will sprinkle upon it a spirit of truth like water of purification, from all the abominations of falsehood and (from) being polluted by a spirit of impurity, so that upright ones may achieve insight in the knowledge of the Most High and the wisdom of the sons of Heaven, and the perfect in way become wise.⁵¹

It is held by certain scholars that the gbr whom God will purify is an individual, viz. Messiah, and that mbny 'ysh is to be taken comparatively

⁴⁸Sim. 5:6:1-6.

⁴⁹The Rule uses the root thr. The writer has Mal. 3:3 in mind, though the Malachi passage has "sons of Levi" as its object.

⁵⁰The root is again thr. ⁵¹IQ S 4:18-22.

with the meaning, "more than," and that the reference is to the suffering of the Servant.⁵² Even if this individualist interpretation is incorrect (for the Community expected two Messiahs),⁵³ the reference to the cleansing of the flesh of the Servant is clear, and the connexion between the Rule and the Shepherd at least possible if not probable.

The Church. We have attempted to see that doubts have been raised about the Christian content of the Shepherd on the grounds, first, of his use of *κύριος* and second, of his peculiar doctrine of the Spirit. There is, however, a third major objection which has been laid against Hermas, viz. his doctrine of the Church.

Hermas has no direct reference to the call or commissioning of the apostles or to the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. In his vision of the Old Woman he is told that the Church is as old as creation: "She was created the first of all things. For this reason is she old; and for her sake was the world established."⁵⁴ The doctrine that the Church is as old as creation is apparently the only interpretation of the Church which we find in the Shepherd. In the first Vision the Old Woman reads to Hermas

⁵²H. E. Del Medico, "La traduction d'un texte démarqué dans le Manuel de Discipline," in Vetus Testamentum, Vol. VI, 1956, pp. 34-9; Bo Reicke, Handschriften von Qumran, Symbolae Biblicae Upsalienses, No. XIV (Upsala: 1952).

⁵³P. Wernberg-Møller, The Manual of Discipline (Michigan: 1957), p. 86.

⁵⁴Vis. 2:4:1.

words which were "profitable" and "gentle," and says,

Lo, "the God of hosts" whom I love, by His mighty power, and by His great wisdom "created the world," and by His glorious counsel surrounded His creation with beauty, and by His mighty word "fixed the heaven and founded the earth upon the waters," and by His own wisdom and forethought created His Holy Church, which He also blessed.⁵⁵

This treatment of the Church by Hermas corresponds to an interpretation of Israel commonly found in the Old Testament. When the Old Testament refers to God as the Creator or Father of Israel the primary reference is to the Exodus.⁵⁶ Israel's deliverance from Egypt was the creative act by which God had constituted Israel the people of His covenant-election.⁵⁷ This particular deliverance, however, was not recorded as a purely historical event but was interpreted theologically as an analogy of the primal act of creation. In the primordial act of creation the Creator gave lawfulness and order to chaos,⁵⁸ just as He would overcome the catastrophe of Israel's Exile by bringing His people from their present chaos and darkness⁵⁹ into the order and light of the Return.⁶⁰ This res-

⁵⁵Vis. 1:3:4. The idea that God has created "that which is out of that which is not" for the sake of His Church is also found in Vis. 1:1:6.

⁵⁶Isa. 43:15, cf. 65:18, Deut. 32:6, and Ps. 135, 136 which "virtually identify God's action in giving birth to Israel with His action in creating the earth," G. A. F. Knight, A Christian Theology of the Old Testament, p. 162.

⁵⁷G. Ernest Wright, God Who Acts (London: 1958), pp. 50-5.

⁵⁸Ps. 104:6-9; Jer. 5:20ff.; Job 38:8-11; Prov. 8:29.

⁵⁹Isa. 40:3f., 41:18f., 43:19f.; Jer. 31:2; Isa. 42:16.

⁶⁰Isa. 64:1-8; Mal. 3:1-4, 6.

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 toration of the people is analogous also, the first call of Israel from its house of bondage,⁶¹ which in turn points back and witnesses to the primordial creation and making of man, Adam.⁶² The Passover Feast itself, as a representation and commemoration of the decisive act of God who, controlling and mastering the elements of nature, brought His covenant people out of their captivity, is also given cosmic significance.⁶³ At any rate when God is referred to as "Father" in the Old Testament, the context is His paternal affection for Israel which assures His people that He will redeem them from their Exile as He has redeemed Israel out of the house of bondage. The Old Testament nowhere thinks of God the Father in the Stoic sense of $\delta \pi α τ η ρ$ but thinks of Him rather as the One whose gracious redemption

⁶¹Isa. 41:18f., 43:18f.

⁶²G. Lambert, "La creation dans la Bible," in *Nouvelle Revue Theologique*, 1953, pp. 252ff.; F. M. T. de Liagre Böhl, "Bara," in *Alttestamentliche Studien*, Kittel-Festschrift, *Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament*, 1913, pp. 42ff.; P. Humbert, "Emploi et portée du verbe bara," in *Theologische Zeitschrift* (Basel: 1947), pp. 401f. Karl Barth rightly states, "The meaning and reality of the history of Paradise is to be found in the history of Israel," *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*, Vol. III, Pt. I, *Die Lehre von der Schöpfung* (Zurich: 1945); E. T. Church *Dogmatics*, Vol. III, Pt. I; *The Doctrine of Creation* (Edinburgh: 1958), p. 275 and context. Cf. also Moore, *Judaism*, Vol. I, pp. 449f., n.3. In Deut. 32:6 we read: "Is not he thy father that hath gotten thee ($\overline{\eta} \overline{\eta} \overline{\eta}$)? He hath made thee ($\overline{\eta} \overline{\psi} \overline{\chi}$), and established thee" ($\overline{\eta} \overline{\eta} \overline{\eta} \overline{\eta}$). There is an interesting parallel in thought and language in the Ugaritic Texts: "That our progenitor is eternal, to all generations our begetter," 76. III.6-7, ed. Gordon. The word "progenitor" is from the root *qny*, and "begetter" from the root *kvn*. The combination of the two directly parallels in sense the Deuteronomic passage. The word $\overline{\eta} \overline{\eta} \overline{\eta}$ is regularly used in Bible poetry to refer to the Creator. Cf. also Ugaritic Text 51.I.23 (ed. Gordon), where *qnyt ilm* ("Creatress of the gods") is found.

⁶³Cf. the argument among later Jewish scholars as to whether creation took place in Nisan - spring - or Tishni - autumn. In either case the argument was about the Passover as the Festival of "new beginning," i.e. it had a reference backwards to Creation as well as forwards to the Day of the Lord. See also J. Pedersen, *Israel*, Vols. III-IV, (London and Copenhagen: 1940), pp. 444ff.

of His people from Egypt and the Exile testify to the power and grace of the Creator who brought order out of chaos. Later Judaism, however, develops this idea and can even describe God as having created Israel as the first of all creatures.⁶⁴

Thus, while the affinities between the Shepherd and the Old Testament and later Judaism are fairly well established, at least so far as a doctrine of the Church is concerned, it is difficult to see the connexion between the Shepherd and the New Testament doctrine of the Church as the one body of Christ built upon the foundations of the apostles as the representatives of the New Israel, and the recipient of the power of the Spirit whereby it is enabled to make disciples of the nations.⁶⁵

We return, therefore, to the question with which we began. Was the author of the Shepherd a Christian? Clearly, if he was not, and if the cumulative evidence of his work forces us to admit any doubt on the matter, he will have nothing to say to us about the meaning of the passion of Christ.

The Authenticity of the "Shepherd."

There are, however, other important aspects of the arguments against accepting this writing as an authentic Christian document. We shall there-

⁶⁴IV Esdras 6:55; 7:11, Ascension of Moses, 1:12; Cf. Moore, Judaism, Vol. I-II, pp. 383, 449f.

⁶⁵I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:4; Luke 22:28-34; Acts 2:1-13; Matt. 28:18ff.

fore briefly discuss these in relation to the three major objections which we have summarized. It is hoped that this discussion will confirm the traditional belief that Hermas was in fact a Christian. When, therefore, we come to examine the Shepherd's apocalyptic teaching concerning the passion and death of Christ and the significance of the cross, we hope to find that this work can properly be regarded as making some contribution to the Christology of the second century Fathers.

The use of $\kappa\upsilon\omicron\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ in the New Testament and after. In the Revelation the Seer describes his vision of the kingdom of God which, though hidden, is yet in our midst. The prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 7:13-27) that the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord is about to be fulfilled, and the Lord is Christ. Jesus Christ is Lord. It is important to notice the significance of this particular affirmation of faith in the New Testament. In the Bible and in the missionary kerygma of the early Church we consistently find that the affirmation of a particular belief about God is always related to the environment in which that belief is denied.⁶⁶ When Deutero-Isaiah, for example, proclaims the invisible God as the Lord of all creation to whom "every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear," the environment in which this belief was affirmed was the idolatrous paganism of the tribes surrounding Israel.⁶⁷ In the New Testament, however,

⁶⁶See Gustaf Wingren, Skapelsen och Lagen (Lund: 1958), E.T. Creation and Law by Ross Mackenzie (Edinburgh: 1961), pp. 4f.

⁶⁷Isa. 45:23.

it is again demanded that "every knee shall bow" and "every tongue confess," but in this case the confession is not that God is one and there is no other. It is rather that "Jesus Christ is Lord."⁶⁸ The great frequency with which κύριος either alone or in combination appears in the Acts and the Epistles proves conclusively that "Lord" is the characteristic appellation given to Jesus in the mission of the Church to the Gentile world.⁶⁹

The word itself, of course, was commonly found in the Hellenistic environment of early Christianity. It could mean commonly an owner,⁷⁰ master as opposed to slave,⁷¹ a title of respect as of slave to master, son to father, pupil to teacher,⁷² or the title applied to the Roman Emperor (κύριος καὶ θεός).⁷³ The title is also frequently used in the mystery religions of the cultic deity, and as early as 62 B.C. Ptolemy XIII was styled κύριος, βασιλεύς, θεός .⁷⁴

⁶⁸Phil. 2:10.

⁶⁹See Vincent Taylor, The Names of Jesus (London: 1953), pp. 44-7.

⁷⁰Mark 12:9; Matt. 20:8; Luke 19:44; Gal. 4:1.

⁷¹Matt. 25:8.

⁷²The Aramaic mari (= "lord") was a title of honour regularly applied to Rabbis, cf. Matt. 23:30, I Pet. 3:6.

⁷³Cf. Acts 25:26.

⁷⁴A. Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East, second edition, rev. 1927, pp. 349-62, says, "When Christianity began, 'Lord' was a divine predicate intelligible to the whole Eastern world."

The title κύριος however, was not taken by the Church from the Hellenistic world. This is the question that has been vigorously debated since Wilhelm Bousset published his important work, Kyrios Christos, in 1913. It seems that there are two much more likely sources for the origin of the term as applied to Christ. The first is Jesus's own interpretation of His ministry. κύριος does not appear in the Q source. The only use in Mark, other than the doubtful reference to the owner of the colt - "The Lord hath need of him"⁷⁵ - is where Jesus appears to be quoting Ps. 110 of Himself: "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou on my right hand."⁷⁶ It is in Luke, however, that we find a much more extensive use of κύριος as a designation of Christ, and Luke, significantly, is the Gospel of the Caesarean community. The term κύριος appears to have been applied most frequently to Jesus after the Resurrection. In the Fourth Gospel, for instance, while there are only three uses of the word in John 1-19,⁷⁷ there are nine uses of the word in John 20-21,⁷⁸ three in Resurrection narratives

⁷⁵Mark 11:3 and the parallel passage, Matt. 21:3.

⁷⁶Mark 12:35ff. See Richardson, Introduction, pp. 91, 153f., 305.

⁷⁷In each case the usage may have been a copyist's gloss, see J. H. Bernard, St. John, 1928, pp. 132, 189, 372; E. C. Hoskyns, The Fourth Gospel, ed. F. N. Davey (London: 1947), pp. 252, 358.

⁷⁸See Taylor, Names of Jesus, p. 43.

and six in post-Resurrection sayings.⁷⁹ The designation κύριος in the New Testament clearly implies the Lordship of Jesus over men, and for this reason became the most frequent designation of the Redeemer in the world mission of the Christian Church.⁸⁰

The most important source of the use of κύριος as a designation of Jesus is the Old Testament itself. In the Septuagint the Tetragrammaton and Adonai are both regularly rendered by κύριος. It is this title which in the bold Christology of the New Testament, particularly in Paul, the "apostle to the Gentiles," is applied to Jesus. From Peter's affirmation that "God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified,"⁸¹ to the vision of the Seer in Revelation κύριος is used to affirm that Jesus was both the promised Deliverer of Israel and the eschatological Lord whose first coming would shortly be followed by His return to establish His kingdom upon the earth.

We are now in a position to return to the significance of the use of κύριος in the Shepherd. The Gebhardt text shows that the word is used 222 times as the characteristic designation of God, and not once of Christ. On

⁷⁹Cf. C. B. Granfield, "St. Mark 9:14-29," in the Scottish Journal of Theology, 1950, Vol. III, p. 60.

⁸⁰See article κύριος in T. W. N. T., Eng. trans. Lord, by Werner Foerster and Gottfried Quell (London: 1950), p. 101: "Without detracting from the cosmic extent of His Lordship, its centre of gravity is His Lordship over men."

⁸¹Acts 2:36.

this basis certain scholars have denied that the Shepherd is a Christian document. But does the frequency of the word as applied to God and not Christ mean any such thing? The great theological conflict within the early period of the Christian Church concerned the observance of the Jewish Law. The rapid expansion of Christianity into the Gentile world meant a severing of ties theologically and geographically with Judaism, but there still lingered in the second century a type of Judaizing Christianity, notably Ebionism, which rejected the Virgin Birth, but assepted Jesus as the Messiah who was seen to return to earth. To the Ebionites Jesus had so perfectly fulfilled the Jewish Law that God had chosen Him to be the Messiah. Jesus improved and augmented the Law, and on His return would establish a messianic kingdom for the Jews. There is a type of adoptionism here which is in certain ways similar to the Shepherd.

The rapid expansion of Christianity into the Gentile world and the almost exclusively Gentile background of its converts would also mean that Jewish apoclayptic thought had not the importance among the Gentile converts that it had among the Jewish. It is highly significant, therefore, that in spite of the alleged Jewish character of the Shepherd, it lacks the characteristic Jewish apocalyptic thought of a general cosmic catastrophe, and in its eschatology is concerned rather with individual conduct and the fate of individual souls.⁸² In this regard the Shepherd is to be distin-

⁸²F. C. Barkitt, Jewish and Christian Apocalypses (London: 1914), p. 44.

guished from Jewish apocalyptic as it also is from such writings as the Apocalypse of Peter.

This latter fact suggests that the Shepherd, even with its apocalyptic form, was in fact written for a Gentile environment rather than a Jewish, and in this environment κύριος would not necessarily, and indeed would not at all, imply a wholly Jewish background. If we add to this the generally acknowledged use of κύριος as the designation par excellence of Christ in the Gentile world in which the gospel was preached, we may at least assert that the argument for a Jewish background to the Shepherd is inconclusive. There may in fact be a parallel between the use of κύριος in the Shepherd and λόγος in Justin Martyr. In both cases, that is, we may be dealing with attempts to accommodate the Christian kerygma to a Gentile environment, and where Justin interpreted the significance of the work of Jesus in terms of a Logos Christology, Hermas may have been attempting to interpret the work of Jesus in terms of a Kyrios Christology in an apocalyptic form.

There is, however, the additional possibility that the Shepherd may have been written at least partially as a polemic against Gnosticism. It was this heresy, we recall, which formed the background against which so much of the theology of the second century Fathers was written. The Gnostic eschatology could not countenance the possibility that flesh would have any place in the resurrection of the dead, and thought rather of the soul as returning at death to the one body of light where Bythos reigns.

The literal interpretation of the kingdom which we find in the Fathers and upheld by them against the Gnostics is characteristic of the method of attack adopted by early Christian writers against the spiritualizing tendencies of Gnosticism.⁸³ Hermas appears to be acquainted with the Didache, and therefore presumably with the sensuous and literal interpretation of the kingdom which we find there.⁸⁴

In the Hellenistic world there were two opposing interpretations of God's relation to the universe, both of which were denied by early Christianity. On the one hand there was the transcendentalist view of the later Platonists, according to which God is wholly to be distinguished from the world, and the immanentist view of Stoic pantheism, according to which God is completely resident in the world. The Gnostics clearly represented the first view, rejected by the Church, while the second view was as little acceptable to the faith which thought of God both as Person and as Creator. When, therefore, Hermas opposes the transcendentalist view, he is also perhaps attacking the Gnostic conception of the Demiurge: "First of all believe that God is one, "who made all things and perfected them, and made all things to be out of that which was not," and contains all things, and

⁸³Did. 10,16; Irenaeus, A.h. V.XXIII; Ep. of Barn. 4:15; Justin, Dial. 80, 81; Tertullian, adv. Marc. 3:24; Hippolytus, Quaest. 70; Lactantius 7:20; Methodius, Conviv. 9:1-5; Commodian, Carm. Apol., 5.979ff.

⁸⁴"Herms not only used, but used up, the Teaching," C. Taylor, The Witness of Hermas to the Four Gospels (London: 1892), p.

is Himself alone uncontained."⁸⁵ The conclusion which we have now reached is that the evidence in the Shepherd does not suggest that we can easily dismiss this work as non-Christian. Its Christology is undeveloped, but its peculiar apocalyptic form is almost certainly Christian and not Jewish.

The Holy Spirit in the Apostolic Fathers. Our task in the present section is a modest one. It is not to attempt an exhaustive analysis of the doctrine of the Spirit in the second century, but merely to show that in comparison with other Christian writers of this period Hermas has at least some affiliation with the admittedly fluid pneumatology of this period. Our sole intention at present is to maintain that the case against accepting Hermas as a Christian is "not proven." We shall later attempt positively to affirm his acceptability as a witness to the Christian gospel when we analyse what we take to be his interpretation of the passion of Christ.

It is argued that the interpretation of the Spirit which we find in the Shepherd is that of an impersonal, indwelling power. But the idea of the indwelling of the Spirit is also characteristic of Irenaeus. Irenaeus, for example, takes the passage in Matt. 12:29 about the binding of the strong man and interprets it of the victory of the Lord on the cross. The devil is the usurper who has taken man into his possession, but the

⁸⁵Mand. 1:1; cf. Aristides, Apol. 1:15; Athenagoras, Apol. 4ff.

Lord in His death and resurrection defeats the devil and delivers man from bondage. The cross represents for Irenaeus the victory of God in the struggle between God and the devil which has continued since man first fell into bondage. In this struggle between man's selfish envy and God's generosity the Spirit has continually been in conflict with the Devil in man. This, for Irenaeus, is the significance of the victory of Christ both in the wilderness and on the cross. It is a victory achieved in Adam's flesh, i.e. in the incarnate flesh of Jesus. Irenaeus continually emphasizes the saving humanity of Christ. What happens in the man who is redeemed by the death of Christ is the continuation of his creation as a man. His true humanity is restored to him by the Spirit. He becomes true man, created in the image and likeness of God, when he is redeemed by Jesus who has assumed his frail humanity in the incarnation. By the indwelling of the Spirit, therefore, man becomes what he was destined to become.⁸⁶ The Spirit comes upon man and refashions him. Man's flesh has for long been the place of conflict between sin and the Spirit, but now the victory of the Son has been accomplished, and the devil is fighting in man a battle that has been already decided at Calvary. Sin's power is broken, and although the conflict continues, the Spirit in man is now victorious, and the image and likeness of God have been restored in fallen man. In what we

⁸⁶Irenaeus speaks of the Spirit "accustoming" Himself to dwell in man; see A.h. IV.xiv.2, III.xvii.1.

have already seen of the doctrine of the Spirit in the Shepherd there is at least a similarity between this work and Irenaeus.

The Shepherd likewise conceives of the Spirit as having created all creation, and refers to it as, "the Holy Spirit which created all creation."⁸⁷ But the doctrine of the Spirit as being active in creation is also frequently found in the Fathers. It is primarily, of course, a New Testament concept. The Nicene Creed calls the Spirit "the giver of life," because the New Testament does so. The Spirit is "that which gives life to the world."⁸⁸ The written code kills, but the Spirit "gives life."⁸⁹ The last Adam has become "a life-giving Spirit."⁹⁰ The obvious Old Testament reference in all these texts is Gen. 2:7, where man is said to become "a living being" by the divine afflation. In the expression of Karl Barth, "It is by the communication and impartation of that in which God exists as God that it comes about that man can exist as man."⁹¹ There is no life for man apart from the life-giving Spirit. The Spirit who was with God in creation is the same Spirit who is in the man who is redeemed by Christ. More than any other second century writer Irenaeus holds together this unity of creation and redemption, and it is in the light of this unity that we are to understand his doctrine of the Spirit. The

⁸⁷Sim. 5:6:5. ⁸⁸John 6:33. ⁸⁹II Cor. 3:6. ⁹⁰I Cor. 15:45.

⁹¹Barth, The Doctrine of Creation, PT. I, p. 57.

Spirit is the "hand" of God and the Son and the Spirit together created man to become the very image of God.⁹² The work of the Spirit is to perfect man in accordance with the will of the Creator at the beginning, and in the work of man's redemption this "recapitulation" of creation has already begun.⁹³ Other second century writers also interpret the Spirit as being active with the Creator in the beginning,⁹⁴ but none so methodically as Irenaeus. What we are again to note, however, is the correspondence on this point between Irenaeus and the Shepherd.

The Shepherd has been criticized for its weakness in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity - "an amalgam of binitarianism and adoptionism."⁹⁵ But this same hesitance and lack of precision about the precise relationship between the Father, Son, and Spirit, characterises other notable writers of the second century. Justin Martyr, for example, does not assign any role at all to the Spirit in the incarnation, and in common with many of his contemporaries interprets the Holy Spirit of Luke 1:35 as the Logos who becomes incarnate.⁹⁶ Theophilus, on the other hand, like Irenaeus, conceives of the Spirit as being, together with the Logos, active with God in creation, but he tends to identify this Spirit with Wisdom, and so in-

⁹²A.h. IV. Pref. iv, IV.xx.1. ⁹³A.h. IV.xiv.4.

⁹⁴Cf. Theophilus, ad Autolyceum 2.10,22.

⁹⁵Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, p. 94.

⁹⁶I Apol. 33.4f.; Cf. Dial. 100.5.

interprets Ps. 33:6, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."⁹⁷

The Shepherd, again, speaks of "earthly spirits" and other spirits which proceed from God. There is also prophetic spirit.⁹⁸ But Justin too speaks of the "prophetic spirit"⁹⁹ which makes Christianity the supreme philosophy. This line of thought is also found in Athenagoras.¹⁰⁰ The sole point that we wish to make is that any argument against accepting the Shepherd as a Christian document on the basis of its doctrine of the Spirit is inconclusive.

We shall now turn to the third main objection laid against the Shepherd, his doctrine of the Church, and having discussed this we hope to show that the cumulative evidence for accepting the Shepherd as an authentic Christian work is strong. Having then set alongside this the doctrine of the cross which we find in this work we shall argue that the total evidence is in favour of the assertion that the ideas which we find in this work contribute much to our understanding of the Christology of the second century.

The eschatology of the "Shepherd" in reference to the Church.

Hermas gives us a strange and powerful picture of the Church. In his first Vision the Church appears to him as an old woman seated on a chair made of

⁹⁷ad Autol. 1.7, 2.18. ⁹⁸Mand. 11.9.

⁹⁹Dial. 87.2ff.; cf. 4.1. ¹⁰⁰Supplicationes, 7.2, 9.1.

snow-white wool, holding a book in her hand.¹⁰¹ She warns Hermas of the anger of the Lord, and reads from her book of how God has fixed the heaven and founded the earth upon the waters, and by His wisdom and forethought has created His holy Church.¹⁰²

In his second Vision the Old woman returns, walking this time and reading aloud from a little book.¹⁰³ She again calls on Hermas's children to repent.¹⁰⁴ It is now revealed to Hermas that the old woman is the Church,¹⁰⁵ which was created first of all things, and for which the world was established.

In the third Vision the old woman again appears to Hermas and shows him "a great tower being built on the water with shining square stones"

(πύργον μέγαν οἰκοδούμενον ἐπὶ ὑδάτων λίθοις τετραγώνοις λαμπροῖς).¹⁰⁶

There is, however, a difference now in the appearance of the woman. Hermas explains:

Now she had appeared to me, brethren, in the first vision in the former year as very old and sitting on a chair. But in the second vision her face was younger, but her body and hair were old and she spoke with me standing; but she was more joyful than the first time. But in the third vision she was quite young and exceedingly beautiful and only her hair was old; and she was quite joyful and sat on a couch.¹⁰⁷

The interpretation of the three ages of the woman is given to Hermas. In the first Vision she appeared old because his spirit was "old

¹⁰¹Vis. 1:2:2. ¹⁰²Vis. 1:3:4. ¹⁰³Vis. 2:1:3.

¹⁰⁴Vis. 2:2:2-8. ¹⁰⁵Vis. 2:4:1. ¹⁰⁶Vis. 3:2:4.

¹⁰⁷Vis. 3:10:3ff.

and fading away." She sat on the chair because of her infirmity.¹⁰⁸ In the second Vision she had a more youthful and a more cheerful countenance, but the body and hair of old age, because "when anyone is old, he already despairs of himself by reason of his weakness and poverty, and expects nothing except the last day of his life. Then an inheritance was suddenly left him, and he heard it, and rose up and was very glad and put on his strength; and no longer he lies down but stands up, and his spirit which was already destroyed by his former deeds is renewed, and he no longer sits still but takes courage."¹⁰⁹ In the third Vision the woman was young, beautiful, and joyful. Why?

Just as if some good news (ἀγγελία ἀγαθή τις) comes to one who is in grief, he straightway forgets his former sorrow, and thinks of nothing but the news which he has heard, and for the future is strengthened to do good, and his spirit is renewed because of the joy which he has received; so you also have received the renewal of your spirits (ἀνανέωσιν τῶν πνευμάτων ὑμῶν) by seeing these good things. And in that you saw her sitting on a couch, the position is secure, for a couch has four feet and stands securely, for even the world is controlled by four elements.¹¹⁰

It is in these visions that we have the Shepherd's profound interpretation of the Church. It is a one-sided misinterpretation to connect the eschatology of the Shepherd with the contemporary Rabbinical doctrine that Israel was as old as creation. We must rather see the meaning of the Shepherd's doctrine of the Church Christologically and eschatologically. The doctrine of the Church as being old yet growing continually young points back to the New Testament doctrine of the Church as the New Israel

¹⁰⁸Vis. 3:11. ¹⁰⁹Vis. 3:12:2. ¹¹⁰Vis. 3:13:2f.

and as the Bride of Christ. When Paul affirms that the old has passed away and the new has come¹¹¹ we are reminded of our Lord's words that the new wine cannot be put into old bottles.¹¹² The sons of the bride-chamber cannot fast, because the bridegroom is with them.¹¹³ The message of Jesus is new; that of Judaism is old. So the new wine of the gospel is contrasted in the Cana miracle with the old wine of the Torah.¹¹⁴

In the New Testament the Church as the Body of Christ is the new Israel.¹¹⁵ There is an identity between the Old Israel and the New. In the Church the "old" in Israel has become renewed. To be in Christ is to know that though our outward nature may waste away, yet our inner nature is being renewed every day.¹¹⁶ The Church is always carrying in its body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in it.¹¹⁷ The experience of the Church is constantly of renewal in Christ.¹¹⁸ The Church is the Bride of Christ, and the union between Christ the head and His members is analogous to the one flesh of the marriage bond.¹¹⁹

¹¹¹II Cor. 5:17. ¹¹²Matt. 9:16. ¹¹³Mark 2:18f.

¹¹⁴See Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 84; Hoskyns and Davey, The Fourth Gospel, p. 189.

¹¹⁵Acts 7:39, 15:14; Rom. 9:25f., 11:16ff.; Gal. 3:7, 29, 6:16; Phil. 3:3; Heb. 4:9; I Pet. 2; Rev. 7:9.

¹¹⁶I Cor. 4:16. ¹¹⁷II Cor. 4:10.

¹¹⁸Heb. 6:6; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:2; Tit. 3:5.

¹¹⁹Eph. 5:22-33, cf. John 3:29; Rev. 21:2, 22:17.

The Church, therefore, rejoices in its union with Christ. It is renewed every day, but its renewal consists in its imitation of Christ in taking the form of a servant in the world, in submitting to suffering and death, and in being raised again by the power of God.¹²⁰ There is unquestionably in the New Testament a line of thought which interprets the renewal of the Church in relation to Christ's own death and resurrection. It is in this light that we are to read the Visions of Hermas in which he saw the Church become progressively younger.

This point becomes even more clear when we re-examine the eschatology of the Shepherd in relation to the Church. The old woman showed Hermas the vision of the great tower being built on the water with shining square stones. We hope later to show that by this vision we are to understand that the Church is grounded in baptism, which manifestly in the New Testament and apocalyptically in Hermas is baptism into the death of Christ. For those so incorporated into Christ by baptism there is a time of testing. We should recall that the context of this particular apocalypse is martyrdom. The Shepherd, indeed, cannot be understood apart from this basic presupposition. In the explanation of the Parable of the Tower it is said that only those are allowed to enter the tower (i.e. enter the kingdom of life) who have "suffered for the law" (οἱ ὑπὲρ τοῦ νόμου παθόντες).¹²¹ As we hope to show shortly, "law" is to be understood here to mean "gos-

¹²⁰I Cor. 15:31; II Cor. 6:9. ¹²¹Sim. 8:3:6.

pel." In the third Vision to which we have already referred a seat is found beside the Woman for those who "have already been found well-pleasing to God and have suffered for the Name."¹²² These are the ones who have borne "stripes, imprisonments, great afflictions, crucifixions, wild beasts, for the sake of the Name."¹²³

It is perfectly clear that Hermas is writing for the consolation and assurance of believers in the period of martyrdom. In several of the second century Fathers we find a strong emphasis on the imitatio Christi in following Christ in His suffering and death. The imitation of Christ does not mean a moralistic or mystic imitation, but implies an ontological relationship between Christ's passion and our redemption. Christians are put to death in martyrdom, and yet they are made alive.¹²⁴ Irenaeus likewise maintains that it is at the point of martyrdom that man is brought into communion with Christ in His death, and thereby is formed anew in His image and likeness.¹²⁵ This is the background of the Shepherd. The early Church was being persecuted and put to death. But in its crucifixion the Church saw that it was being conformed to the death of Christ. In this way, therefore, the martyr Church receives its renewal. The good news of the gospel comes to it in its grief, and believers thereby forget the sorrow of their martyrdom, and their spirits are renewed because of the joy which

¹²²Vis. 3:1:9. ¹²³Vis. 3:2:1.

¹²⁴Cf. Epistle to Diognetus 5:12, 9:5. ¹²⁵A.h. IV. xxxviii.4.

they have received.¹²⁶ Hermas concludes the third Vision by saying:

Those, therefore, who have repented shall completely recover their youth and be well founded, because they have repented with all their heart. You have the revelation (*την ἀποκαλυσιν*) completed.¹²⁷

This is the meaning of the apocalypse. The Church is renewed in its martyrdom, because in its passion it is ontologically related to Christ's passion, and its renewal consists in its martyrdom.

Thus for Hermas we suggest that the progressive renewal of the Church is an apocalyptic expression, first, of the renewal of Israel in the Church. The "old" Torah has become the good news of the gospel. The Church has become the new Israel, not a static institution, but the people of the way, the eschatological Israel which belongs to time and is therefore subject to martyrdom, but which is on the way to the eschaton. Second, for Hermas the renewal of the Church is to be seen in its martyrdom. The Shepherd, we maintain, is apocalyptic in the sense that the Revelation of St. John is apocalyptic.

What we have attempted so far to do is to offer an answer to the question, Was the author of the Shepherd a Christian? If he was not, clearly he has nothing to say to us about the doctrine of Christ's passion. But we have tried to prove that the three major objections laid against the Shepherd are at the least inconclusive. We shall now attempt to examine more closely those parts of the Shepherd which appear to refer directly and

¹²⁶Cf. Vis. 3:13:2. ¹²⁷Vis. 3:13:4.

indirectly to the passion of Christ. We believe that in this way the authentic character of the Shepherd as a Christian document will be proved.

II. THE DOCTRINE OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST IN THE "SHEPHERD"

Salvation and Works

In his book, Doctrine of the Atonement, J. K. Mozley says,

The Didache and Hermas never connect redemption with the death of Christ. For the Didache Jesus is the revealer of knowledge, faith and immortality, while Hermas speaks of the Son of God as first cleansing the people's sins by undergoing much toil, and then showing men the way of life and giving them the law.¹²⁸

It is, in fact, typical of Hermas that salvation ^{and} redemption are connected with repentance or works rather than with the death of Christ or faith in Christ.¹²⁹

In the context of God's anger on account of the "sins and wickednesses" of Hermas's "family," the Old Woman says in the first Vision:

Do not cease, then, correcting your children, for I know that if they repent with all their heart, they will be inscribed in the books of life with the saints.¹³⁰

Here salvation is connected with repentance, but not with Christ. In the second Vision the Woman says:

You are saved by not "having broken away from the living God," and

¹²⁸Mozley, Doctrine of the Atonement, pp. 97, 190, 193.

¹²⁹"He moves throughout in an atmosphere of recompense," K. E. Kirk, The Vision of God (London: 1934), p. 167; cf. H. Rashdall, The Idea of Atonement (London: 1925), p. 190, "Hermas is entirely occupied with repentance, forgiveness, and salvation."

¹³⁰Vis. 1:3:2.

by your simplicity and great temperance. These things have saved you, if you remain in them, and they save all whose deeds are such, and who walk in innocence and simplicity.¹³¹

This line of thought is characteristic of the Shepherd. Hermas states that there are luxuries which bring men salvation, "luxury" being defined as an act which a man does with pleasure, i.e. there are luxuries which are sinful and sensual, but there are also luxuries which are good works.¹³²

Elsewhere he can say, "I know that if I do not again add to my sins I shall be saved."¹³³ Salvation is further defined in a later Mandate as being obtained by doing all things well and by fearing the Lord and keeping His commandments.¹³⁴ These commandments are "beautiful and joyful and glorious and able to save the soul of man."¹³⁵

While admitting the concentration on good works in the Shepherd, and even the suggestion of a work of supererogation,¹³⁶ we should note that in his doctrine of good works Hermas has much in common with other writers of the second century. For many of these Christianity is the new "law," and eternal life is the reward for obedience. Consequently much stress is laid on fasting and alms giving as meritorious works.¹³⁷

¹³¹Vis. 2:3:2. ¹³²Sim. 6:5:7, cf. 6:5:5.

¹³³Mand. 4:3:7. ¹³⁴Mand. 7:1. ¹³⁵Sim. 6:1:1.

¹³⁶Sim. 5:3:3, "If you do anything good, beyond the commandment of God, you will gain for yourself greater glory, and shall be more honourable with God than you were destined to be."

¹³⁷II Clem. 3:3f., 8:4ff., 9:5, 16:4; Ep. of Barn. 19.

On the other hand, however, salvation in the Shepherd is not exclusively linked with repentance or works. In the third Vision the Woman says to Hermas, who has asked why the tower (= the Church) has been built on water:

Hear, then why the tower has been built upon the water: because your life was saved and shall be saved through water, and the tower has been founded by the utterance (τῷ ῥήματι) of the almighty and glorious Name, and is maintained by the unseen power of the master.¹³⁸

This in many ways is a remarkable passage. Salvation here is inferred to be through baptism. It is the means of incorporation into the tower, i.e. the Church. We shall examine this more closely in a moment. But we should note that the passage appears to contain pure Trinitarian doctrine! The tower was founded by the utterance of the almighty Name, and is maintained by the power of the master. This fact alone makes us hesitant to deny that the Shepherd is a Christian writing.

The connexion between salvation and Christ is seen more clearly in the ninth Parable where Hermas asks the meaning of the rock and the door of the tower. Both are the Son of God, and those who are to be saved are to enter through the gate that is the Son of God.¹³⁹ While we must realize that for Hermas the Son of God is the Spirit,¹⁴⁰ he also thinks of the Son of God as the servant who cleansed the sins of the people.¹⁴¹ This is another example of what we have already admitted to be the unsettled Trini-

¹³⁸Vis. 3:3:5. ¹³⁹Sim. 9:12:3. ¹⁴⁰Sim. 9:1:1. ¹⁴¹Sim. 5:6:2.

tarian doctrine of the Shepherd, but we are justified in interpreting the door in the ninth Parable as referring to Christ. The relationship between faith in Christ and salvation is implicit in the third Vision where it is stated that through her (sc. faith) the chosen of God are saved, and explicit in the eighth Parable: "The Lord, being long-suffering, wishes those who were called through His Son to be saved."¹⁴²

Baptism.

We have already seen that the Church for Hermas is "built on the water" (οἰκοδομούμενον ἐπὶ ὕδατων).¹⁴³ Hermas in his vision asks the Woman why this is so, and she replies thus:

Hear, then, why the tower has been built upon the water: because your life was saved and shall be saved through water, and the tower has been founded by the utterance (τῷ ῥήματι) of the almighty and glorious Name, and is maintained by the unseen power of the Master.¹⁴⁴

There are two points of interest here. In the first place, there appears to be an implicit reference, as we have already noted, to the Trinitarian baptismal formula. Though several New Testament texts¹⁴⁵ show that in origin baptism was in the name of Christ only, it was regularly administered in the second century in the name of the Trinity.¹⁴⁶ But what Hermas tells us in regard to the "name" of the Son of God is of great interest.

In the ninth Parable the angel, explaining to Hermas the meaning of

¹⁴²Vis. 3:8:3; Sim. 8:9:1. ¹⁴³Vis. 3:2:4. ¹⁴⁴Vis. 3:3:5.

¹⁴⁵Acts 2:38, etc. ¹⁴⁶Cf. Did. 7:1-3.

the parable of the rock and the door, says that "no man shall enter into the kingdom of God, except he take His (sc. the Son of God's) holy name."¹⁴⁷ The reference to bearing the name of the Son of God is repeated later in the same Parable.¹⁴⁸ These and other references in the Shepherd remind us of the profound importance of the expression "in," or "into the name" (ἐν ὀνόματι, εἰς ὄνομα) for the apostolic Church.¹⁴⁹ The use of the word "name" extends back to the Old Testament concept that the name of God is put upon Israel.¹⁵⁰ In Christian baptism the name of God is called upon the person baptised.¹⁵¹ To be baptised in the name of Christ means for the writers of the New Testament to be baptised into the area of God's mighty acts in the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son. This is why Peter can speak of baptism as saving us,¹⁵² because in baptism we die along with Christ in His death,¹⁵³ and in baptism we rise with Christ from death into a living union with Him. This is what Titus means when he calls baptism "the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit."¹⁵⁴

Hermas appears likewise to have thought of baptism as the applica-

¹⁴⁷Sim. 9:12:4. ¹⁴⁸Sim. 9:13:7.

¹⁴⁹See Church of Scotland: General Assembly's Special Commission on Baptism, Interim Report, May 1955, pp. 16ff.

¹⁵⁰Deut. 28:10; Num. 6:22-7. ¹⁵¹Jas. 2:7. ¹⁵²I Pet. 3:21.

¹⁵³Rom. 6:3. ¹⁵⁴Titus 3:5; cf. Eph. 5:26.

tion to the baptised of the death of the Son of God, and his participation in Christ's life: "Before a man bears the name of the Son of God, he is dead. But when he receives the seal (τὴν σφραγίδα) he puts away mortality and receives life."¹⁵⁵ The use of the word "seal" is significant. The idea has long history. In his vision the prophet Ezekiel had seen that the faithful Jews who had not succumbed to heathenism were marked on their foreheads with the taw.¹⁵⁶ The writer of the Apocalypse takes up this idea and speaks of the sealing of the foreheads of the servants of God before the four angels exercise their power to harm earth and sea.¹⁵⁷ Now the seal on the forehead is the seal of baptism. The word σφραγίς, however, is used characteristically in the New Testament of baptism. The seal of the covenant established with Abraham was circumcision, which Paul calls the seal of Abraham's righteousness by faith.¹⁵⁸ Baptism is correspondingly the seal of the new covenant which God has established in Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁹

We should note the connexion of thought between the mark of baptism in the context of martyrdom in the Apocalypse and the mark of baptism in the context of "stripes, imprisonments, great afflictions, crucifixions, wild beasts, for the sake of the name" in Hermas.¹⁶⁰ In the Shepherd

¹⁵⁵Sim. 9:16:3. ¹⁵⁶Ezek. 9:4ff. ¹⁵⁷Rev. 7:3, 9:4.

¹⁵⁸Rom. 4:11. ¹⁵⁹II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13, 4:20. ¹⁶⁰Vis. 3:2:1.

the seal is the water. We have already noted that the reference here is to baptism: "When (a man) receives the seal he receives life They (sc. the candidates for baptism) go down then into the water dead, and come up alive."¹⁶¹ But there is also a clear reference here to the eschatological significance of baptism. Let us consider this briefly.

The reference in the Shepherd to the Church "built on the water" recalls a further line of thought in regard to baptism which we find in the Gospels where Jesus quotes the example of Noah. The context is a warning of the imminence of the divine judgment:

For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man.¹⁶²

There are several important references to Noah and the flood in the New Testament. The Lucan parallel to the Matthean passage again stresses the unexpected nature of the Parousia and calls for watchfulness.¹⁶³ In Hebrews Noah is commended for his faith and obedience in a passage which blends the ideas of judgment and mercy.¹⁶⁴ In Jude there is an oblique reference to the flood as a sign of God's judgment.¹⁶⁵ In II Peter the flood is regarded as one of the three great acts of God's judgment, the others being the punishment of the angels that sinned and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.¹⁶⁶ In the following chapter of this Epistle the

¹⁶¹Sim. 9:16:3f. ¹⁶²Matt. 24:38f. ¹⁶³Luke 17:26f.

¹⁶⁴Heb. 11:7. ¹⁶⁵Jude 5. ¹⁶⁶II Pet. 2:4ff.

judgment of God made evident in the flood is declared to have been brought about by the same word to which the heavens and the earth attribute their existence:

They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.¹⁶⁷

In I Peter, however, the emphasis is on the divine mercy, and the waters of the flood are directly stated to correspond to baptism:

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is eight persons, were saved through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you.¹⁶⁸

The influence of Isaiah on I Peter has frequently been noted by commentators, and Peter must have been aware of the reference to Noah in Isa.

54: "For this is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth (the Septuagint reads ὅτι τοῦ ὕδατος τοῦ ἐπὶ Νῶε τοῦτό μοί ἐστιν, καθότι ἡμοῖα αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ ἐκείνῳ τῇ γῇ μὴ θυμωθῆσθαι ἐπὶ σοὶ ἔτι), so have I sworn that I will not be angry with you.¹⁶⁹

Noah and the story of the flood played a large part in the thought of Jewish hagiographa, notably Enoch and Jubilees (second century B.C.). In the Pirqe Aboth there is an illuminating reference to God's patience in holding back the violence of His judgment for 120 years "to show how

¹⁶⁷II Pet. 3:5. ¹⁶⁸I Pet. 3:18-21. ¹⁶⁹Isa. 54:9f.

great was His long-suffering."¹⁷⁰ The apostolic Fathers also take up this important Old Testament narrative and reinterpret it Christologically.

Justin Martyr has a notable passage in the Dialogue in which his dependence on Peter is quite clear:

In the time of the flood was implicit the mystery of man's salvation. At the time of the flood the righteous Noah with his wife and three sons and their wives, making in all eight persons, were a figure of the eighth day on which Christ appeared as risen from the dead and which is always first in rank. Now Christ, the first-born of every creature, is become the head of a new race, which has been regenerated by Him through water, faith, and wood, which embraces the mystery of the cross, as Noah, together with his family, was saved by the wood of the ark carried on the waters. When then the prophet says, "In the time of Noah I saved thee," as I said before, he speaks also to people faithful to God and possessing these signs As the whole earth, according to the scriptures, was inundated, it is obvious that it was not to the earth that God speaks, but to the people who obeyed Him, for whom He has prepared a harbour of rest (ἀνάπαυσιν) at Jerusalem, as it was shown beforehand by all the figures at the time of the flood; and I mean here that those who themselves prepared by water, faith, and wood, and repented of their sins, will escape the future judgment of God.¹⁷¹

It is significant that the Shepherd relates baptism to the idea of the Church as being built on the waters and to the "eschatological pause"

¹⁷⁰Pirqe Aboth 5.2. See Mishnah. Abot. Sayings of the Jewish Fathers, edited by Charles Taylor (Cambridge: 1877).

¹⁷¹Dial. 138:2-5. Irenaeus similarly quotes Matt. 24:42 and says, "God saves the race of Adam by the figure of the ark." He also speaks of the ἀνάπαυσιν as the period before the end when God will finally establish His kingdom, A.H. V.MXXV.4. God in His patience has given men a "breathing-space" before the final judgment. For a full treatment of the points raised here see E. G. Selwyn, The First Epistle of Peter (London: 1949), pp. 328-36; J. H. Bernard, Odes of Solomon, Texts and Studies Vol. VIII. No. 3 (Cambridge: 1912), pp. 32-9; and the same author's "The Descent into Hades and Christian Baptism" in The Expositor, Series VIII, No. 64, April 1916, pp. 241ff.; Daniélou, From Shadows to Reality, pp. 69-102; P. Lundberg, La typologie baptismale dans l'ancienne Eglise, 1942, pp. 73-9.

of the divine patience. We have already discussed the allusion to baptism in the trinitarian name in the third Vision.¹⁷² The Church is built upon the water. When this passage is read in conjunction with the ninth Parable¹⁷³ the reference to Christian baptism and the connexion of the line of thought with the story of the flood becomes quite clear. In this latter passage Hermas has asked why the stones which were fitted into the tower came from the deep (ἐκ τοῦ βυθοῦ). He is told, "They had need to come up through the water that they might be made alive, for they could not otherwise enter into the kingdom of God unless they put away the mortality of their former life."¹⁷⁴ There follows the reference to the receiving of the seal which we have already discussed. After this we have an illuminating discussion of the "forty" stones who are "prophets and teachers of the preaching of the Son of God."¹⁷⁵ Hermas asks why these came up from the deep, having already received the seal of baptism. He is told,

Because these apostles and teachers, who preached the name of the Son of God, having fallen asleep in the power and faith of the Son of God, preached also to those who had fallen asleep before them, and themselves gave to them the seal of the preaching. They went down with them therefore into the water and came up again, but the latter went down alive and came up alive, while the former, who had fallen asleep before, went down dead but came up alive. Through them, therefore, they were made alive, and received the knowledge of the name of the Son of God.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷²Vis. 3:3:5. ¹⁷³Sim. 9:16. ¹⁷⁴Sim. 9:16:1f.

¹⁷⁵Sim. 9:16:4. ¹⁷⁶Sim. 9:16:5ff.

While it is strange that the descensus ad inferos should here be applied to the apostles and teachers of the gospel rather than to Christ Himself, the connexion between the descensus and baptism is implicit. Although modern scholars have a tendency to refer almost exclusively to I Pet. 3:18ff. as the authority for the credal statement that "Christ descended into hell," it is interesting to record that not until very late in the second century is this passage quoted as an authority for the belief.¹⁷⁷ In this same period we also find that the significance of Christ's descensus is applied to the baptism of the Christian. Passages such as Isa. 45:2 and Ps. 107:16 were clearly applicable both to the baptism of Christian believers and to Christ's descensus. If we allow that behind Hermas's strange reference to the apostles and teachers of the gospel there lies a belief that Christ Himself descended ad inferos, we can trace in this particular passage an ontological relationship between Christ's passion and the redemption of believers. In Christian baptism the powers which hold a man in bondage are broken and death is destroyed.

¹⁷⁷See E. G. Selwyn, The First Epistle of Peter, p. 340; F. Loofs, "Christ's Descent to Hades" in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (edited by James Hastings; Edinburgh: 1908-26), Vol. IV, p. 659b.; H. B. Swete, The Apostles' Creed (London: 1894), p. 58. The belief itself, of course, was accepted as orthodox in this period, and the interpretation was that Christ had descended into hell in order to destroy the powers of death and liberate the righteous dead (Melito, Homily on the Passion, 13-17; Acta Pilati 5.(21)-10; Irenaeus, A.h. I.xxvii.3; Odes of Solomon 42.15ff.; Ignatius, Phil. 9.1; Clement of Alexandria, Strom. 6.6, etc.).

The other point which we require to discuss in this connexion is what we have called the eschatological "pause" of the divine forbearance. The Pirque Aboth had spoken of the patience of God in holding back the violence of His judgment for one hundred and twenty years before the floods came. This concept of a "pause" or a "rest" in the period immediately preceding the eschaton is taken up and developed in the apostolic Fathers, as we have already noted. It is also a concept which we find in the Shepherd. In the ninth Parable Hermas has been asking about those who have been rejected from the tower because of their disobedience and sin. He asks if they will be allowed to enter into the house of God should they repent and put away their lusts. He is told,

They will enter if they put away (their evil works). For this cause also there was a pause (ἀποχή) in the building, in order that, if they repent, they may go away into the building of the tower. But if they do not repent, then others will enter and they will be finally rejected.¹⁷⁸

We find a clearer illustration in this Parable. Hermas there sees that on the day the building was finished, "the tower was not completed, for it was going to be built on to, and there was a pause (ἀποχή) in the building."¹⁷⁹ The dominant note in this passage is of eschatological preparedness. The tower cannot be completed unless the Lord come and test it.¹⁸⁰ The master of the tower is coming.¹⁸¹ When he arrives he orders

¹⁷⁸Sim. 9:14:1f. ¹⁷⁹Sim. 9:5:1. ¹⁸⁰Sim. 9:5:2.

¹⁸¹Sim. 9:5:6.

the stones lying by the tower to be cleansed and put into the building.¹⁸²

The message of the Shepherd is clear. The tower which is the Church is soon to be completed. The Lord of the tower is soon to return. God has given this time of rest for repentance:

For all these there is repentance but it must be speedy, that they may now retrace their days and the omissions of former years, and do some good. If then they repent and do some good they will live to God, but if they remain in their deeds they will be . . . put to death.¹⁸³

It is here that we find Hermas at his most simple and evangelical. The Shepherd is not merely a negative summons to repentance, but a positive seeking of righteousness.¹⁸⁴ Yet this righteousness is not a reward given to those who seek it, but a gift of "the most revered angel," i. e. the pre-existent Holy Spirit, or the Son who dwelt in the body of Jesus. Hermas has thus a sense of the enabling grace of God: "It is not possible that these commandments be kept without these maidens" (i.e. without the Spirit).¹⁸⁵ The fault of Hermas is that he fails to stress the place and significance of the historic Christ as the author of salvation and the One by whose indwelling the believer passes from death to life.

The Cross and the Atonement.

There are few direct allusions to the passion and atonement of Christ in the Shepherd. We have already examined briefly one of these.

¹⁸²Sim. 9:6; 9:7:2. ¹⁸³Sim. 9:20:4.

¹⁸⁴Vis. 3:1:6. ¹⁸⁵Sim. 9:13:2, 10:3:1.

In the fifth Parable the angel says to Hermas:

"Listen," said he: "The Son of God is not given the form of a servant (δουλου ὄμοιον), but is given great power and lordship." "How, sir?" said I, "I do not understand." "Because God planted the vineyard," said he, "that is, created the people, and gave it over to His Son. And the Son appointed the angels over them to keep them. And He Himself cleansed their sins, labouring much and undergoing much toil. For no vineyard can be dug without toil or labour. When, therefore, He had cleansed the sins of the people, he showed them the ways of life, and gave them the law which He received from His Father (καὶ αὐτὸς τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν ἐκαθάρισε πολλὰ νόμιμα καὶ πολλοὺς νόμους ἡντιμεύας. οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀμπελῶν δύναται σκαθῆναι ἄνευ κόπου ἢ μόχθου. αὐτὸς οὖν καθάρισας τὰς ἀμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ ἐδείξεν αὐτοῖς τὰς τρίβους τῆς ζωῆς, δὸς αὐτοῖς τὸν νόμον, ὃν ἔλαβε παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ).¹⁸⁶

It is interesting to note that Hermas defines the meaning of the atonement as Christ's cleansing of the people's sins and His teaching them the gospel (i.e. the "law" of the eternal city).¹⁸⁷ In the fifth Parable the stress is on cleansing and teaching.

Redemption as cleansing. The thought of "cleansing" or "purification" is a characteristic one in Hermas. The word καθάρω is used by him more than any of the other Apostolic Fathers.¹⁸⁸ The summons to purification is frequent.

You shall keep them (sc. the commandments) if your heart be pure towards the Lord, and all who ever purify their hearts from the vain desires of this world shall keep them, and shall live to God (καὶ ἡγοῦνται τὰς ἐντολὰς).¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶Sim. 5:6:1ff. ¹⁸⁷Sim. 1:1-9.

¹⁸⁸Vis. 2:3:1, 3:2:2, 3:8:11, 3:9:8, 4:3:4; Mand. 10:3:4; Sim. 6:5:2, 7:2, 8:7:5, 9:7:2, 9:7:6, 9:20:4, 9:18:3, etc.

¹⁸⁹Mand. 12:6:5.

Note the connexion here between purification and life. We find, however, that characteristically Hermas tends to connect purification with repentance.¹⁹⁰ Occasionally Hermas states that the Church will be cleansed on the basis of its knowledge of God, without which it will be condemned to death:

If then he who is bound to do good do wickedly, does he not seem to do more wickedly than he who does not know God? For this reason, those who have no knowledge of God (οἱ μὴ ἐγνωνότες θεόν) and do wickedly, are condemned to death, but those who have knowledge of God and have seen His great deeds, and do wickedly, shall be punished doubly, and shall die for ever. Thus therefore the Church of God shall be cleansed.¹⁹¹

This close connexion between purification and knowledge or wisdom is also found elsewhere.¹⁹²

Redemption as knowledge. In his second Vision Hermas saw the Old Woman walking and reading out from a little book. She enquires if he can take a message to the "elect of God," i.e. to the Church. The message is contained in the booklet which the Woman is reading, and because it is long Hermas asks permission to write it out from the book. He does so, but because the manuscript is written in continuous script he is unable to understand its meaning. Fifteen days later, however, after fasting and praying to the Lord the knowledge (γῶσις) of the message was revealed to him.¹⁹³ Hermas may well have been thinking at this point of John 20:9, where it is said that the apostles did not know the scripture. What is this γῶσις

¹⁹⁰Sim. 5:3:6, 7:2, 8:11:3, 9:8:4, 9:23:5; Mand. 9:4,7.

¹⁹¹Sim. 9:18:2. ¹⁹²See e.g. Vis. 3:9:8. ¹⁹³Vis. 2:1:3-2:1.

which can be revealed for Hermas only "from above"? It is a summons to repentance¹⁹⁴ and the offer of mercy.¹⁹⁵ It is a promise of the forgiveness of sins,¹⁹⁶ and a call to faithfulness in persecution which is based on Christ's own faithful martyrdom.¹⁹⁷

It is interesting to note that in the important passage from the Parable of Fasting which we have quoted Hermas does not use the Greek πάσχειν for the sufferings of the Son of God.¹⁹⁸ Indeed he does not use this word at all of the passion of Christ. In the Shepherd πάσχειν is used characteristically of believers who suffer for the name of the Son of God. Thus in the third Vision the place on the right side of the Old Woman is reserved for the martyrs who have "suffered for the Name."¹⁹⁹ In the eighth Parable the ones who are crowned and allowed to go into the tower (= the Church) are those who "wrestled with the devil and conquered him . . . These are they who suffered for the law (= the gospel)."²⁰⁰

We have already seen earlier how the context of martyrdom gives the Shepherd its characteristic emphasis. In particular we noted that Hermas's doctrine of the Church ever renewed through its sufferings has a strong place in this work. This line of thought is the dominant one also in almost all that Hermas has to say about suffering. The suffering about which he writes is the martyrdom of the early Church. As we hope to prove

¹⁹⁴Vis. 2:2:2. ¹⁹⁵Vis. 2:2:3. ¹⁹⁶Vis. 2:2:4. ¹⁹⁷Vis. 2:2:7f.

¹⁹⁸Sim. 5:6. ¹⁹⁹Vis. 3:1:9. ²⁰⁰Sim. 8:3:6f.

shortly, the thought of Christ's passion is not altogether absent from the Shepherd, but it is not strongly emphasised. The foreground is filled with the martyrdom of believers. This is seen in notable clarity in the ninth Parable, where Hermas speaks in detail about those "who have suffered for the name of the Son of God, who also suffered readily with all their heart and gave up their lives." These are they who "suffered for the Name," and are glorious before God, "and the sins of all these have been taken away because they suffered for the Name of the Son of God." When they were brought before the authorities (the Roman magistrates?) they "did not deny, but suffered readily." The counsel of Hermas is therefore that the martyrs should count themselves blessed if they suffer "for God's sake."²⁰¹

In the Parable of Fasting we find that the faithful servant (the Son of God) who is charged with the oversight of the vineyard is not stated to have endured suffering, as he is in the passage which we have already discussed. He is, however, designated the servant (δούλος) of God.²⁰² This is a very common designation in Hermas.²⁰³ In this same parable we again find a reference to "knowledge" or "understanding" (οὔνεσις) defined as the quest of all who are the servants of God. It will be granted by Him

²⁰¹See the whole chapter, Sim. 9:28. ²⁰²Sim. 5:2.

²⁰³Vis. 1:2:4, 4:1:3; Mand. 4:1:8, etc.; 11:1, 12:5:2; Sim. 1:1 (cf. Did. 4:11), 5:2:2, 6,7 (cf. Did. 4:10), 5:4:1, 5:5:5, 5:6:1,4,21, 9:15:1, 19:1,3, etc.

to all who ask for it.²⁰⁴

The Cross of Christ is never directly alluded to as such in Hermas. Some commentators have perhaps found more in Hermas than the writer intended himself to convey.²⁰⁵ There appears to be an allusion to the seamless robe in the ninth Parable.²⁰⁶ This latter reference is possibly more certain than others like it. For the early Fathers the seamless robe of Christ is a symbol of the unity of the Church.²⁰⁷ Hermas stresses this note of unity:

For this reason you see that the tower has become one solid stone with the rock. So also those who believe on the Lord through His Son, and put on these spirits will become "one spirit and one body," and the colour of their raiment will be one.²⁰⁸

Deliverance from the serpent. In the fourth Vision Hermas sees dust rising up to heaven as he walks into the country. He sees that it is caused by a beast like some Leviathan, a hundred feet long. In fear he prays to the Lord to be rescued, but "being clothed in the faith of the Lord," he takes courage and faces the beast. The beast rushes forward,

²⁰⁴Sim. 5:4:3f.

²⁰⁵See e.g. C. Taylor, The Witness of Hermas to the Four Gospels, p. 140. Taylor finds a possible allusion in Vis. 4:2:6 to the scourging; and in Vis. 3:2:4, where the Old Woman seats (καθίζει) Hermas on the bench, to John 19:13, when Pilate causes Jesus to sit down, cf. Justin I Apol. 35.

²⁰⁶Sim. 9:32:3.

²⁰⁷See e.g. Cyprian, de catholicae Ecclesiae unitate, 7.

²⁰⁸Sim. 9:13:5, cf. Sim. 8:2:3.

but as Hermas comes towards it it stretches itself out on the ground, and remains motionless.²⁰⁹ Hermas is afterwards told that he has escaped the beast that can destroy nations because he has believed that salvation can be found through nothing save through the great and glorious name.²¹⁰ Is this beast the serpent of the Fall narrative? Hermas does not tell us, and there is insufficient evidence to state that it is. The mention of the serpent reminds us of a second Old Testament passage, that in which the Lord sent fiery serpents to do damage to the Israelites.²¹¹ In both passages the serpent has a baleful and destructive connotation. In the Shepherd the beast is "such a beast as could destroy nations,"²¹² Hermas is able to look at the serpent and not be destroyed by it, despite his fear, because he has prayed to the Lord, remembered the great things that he has been taught, and has believed that salvation can be found through nothing save through the great and glorious name.²¹³ In the Book of Numbers the people are able to look at the bronze serpent and not die from the bite of a serpent. This passage is an interesting one. It may be an indication that at some point in the religious development of Israel serpent-worship was not unknown, but in the passage of Numbers, the purpose of turning to the serpent was to recollect the Covenant and the giving of the Law. The people prayed to the Lord, remembered the Commandments that they

²⁰⁹Vis. 4:1. ²¹⁰Vis. 4:2:h. ²¹¹Gen. 3:15, Num. 21:6.

²¹²Vis. 4:2:3. ²¹³Vis. 4:1:7f., 4:2:h.

had been taught, and trusted in the power of Jahveh to save them. A passage from the Wisdom of Solomon appears to reinforce this interpretation of the Numbers passage:

For when the horrible fierceness of beasts came upon these, and they perished with the stings of crooked serpents, thy wrath endured not for ever: but they were troubled for a small season, that they might be admonished, having a sign of salvation, to put them in remembrance of the commandment of thy law For he that turned himself toward it was not saved by the thing that he saw, but by thee, that art the Saviour of all.²¹⁴

The passage in Numbers was taken by our Lord and interpreted by Him as a sign of His "elevation." He does not specifically identify His crucifixion with the lifting up of the serpent. Although many of the early Fathers saw in the serpent a type of Christ,²¹⁵ John emphasises rather the "lifting up." As in Israel the lifting up of the serpent turned the hearts of the people to Jahveh, the Saviour, so when Jesus was uplifted He turned men to Himself and so saved them.

The sign of the Son of man. This passage in Numbers was also closely connected in many of the patristic writings with two others from the Old Testament. The holding up of the hands of Moses by Aaron and Hur,²¹⁶ and the Messianic passage in Trito-Isaiah, "I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people,"²¹⁷ were both understood in pa-

²¹⁴Wisd. 16:5ff.

²¹⁵Ep. of Barn. 12:5ff.; Justin, I Apol. 60; Dial. 94, 112; Tertullian, adv. Marc. 3:18.

²¹⁶Exod. 17:12. ²¹⁷Isa. 65:2.

tristic writings as a sign or prefiguring of the Cross. In the Septuagint this latter passage is rendered ἐξεπέτασα τὰς χεῖράς μου ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν πρὸς λαὸν ἀπειθοῦντα. The word ἐκπετάννυμι is used only once in the New Testament in a direct quotation from the passage in Isaiah.²¹⁸ Its basic meaning is a spreading out, or expansion, as of a sail. It is used in a passage of important eschatological significance in the Didache:

And then (sc. the coming of Christ) shall appear the signs of the truth: first, the sign of opening in heaven (σημεῖον ἐκπετάσεως ἐν οὐρανῷ); then the sign of the voice of the trumpet; and third, the resurrection of the dead.²¹⁹

The apparent meaning in the Didache is that Christ and His angels will appear through an opening in heaven, and the sign of Christ's appearing will be this "opening."²²⁰

The Fathers, however, took another passage from the Gospels in which a "sign" of the Son of man is described, viz. the Messianic return as described in Matthew:

Then (sc. after the "tribulation of those days") will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven (καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ), and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.²²¹

We find here the same sequence as in the Didache: (i) the "sign" in heaven; (ii) the sound of the trumpet; and (iii) the resurrection or the gathering of the elect. The primitive nature of this eschatology is cor-

²¹⁸Rom. 10:21. ²¹⁹Did. 16:6.

²²⁰Matt. 3:16. ²²¹Matt. 24:30f.

robored by a similar passage in I Thessalonians: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."²²²

It may well be the case, however, that ἐκπύεσις in the Didache does not refer to the "opening" of heaven at all, but to the unique sign of the Son of man, viz. the cross. Certainly Barnabas understood Isa. 65:2, "I spread out my hands all the day," as prefiguring the cross of Christ, and other Fathers did also. The word may therefore mean, "a spreading out, so as to form a cross." In Job for example, we read: "Can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, the thunderings of His pavilion?"²²³ The Septuagint version reads: καὶ εἰς συνῆ ἀπεντάσεις νεφέλης, ἰσότητα σπηνῆς αὐτοῦ. In Hippolytus we find that the Church is likened to a ship in a storm upon the sea of the world, having Christ for its pilot and the cross for a mast.²²⁴ In the ninth Parable the word ἐκπύεσις is used, again of stretching out hands, but the subject is the twelve maidens who, in the imagery of the Shepherd, are the Spirit.²²⁵ The maidens are said to hold out their hands as if about to take something from the six men

²²²I Thess. 4:14ff. We find interesting parallels to these passages in the Sibylline Oracles 2.188; cf. 4.173ff, and the Ascension of Isaiah, 4.

²²³Job 36:29. ²²⁴Refutation omn. haer. 1.59.

²²⁵Sim. 9:13:2.

who have been commanded to build a tower above the rock. What the maidens take are the stones which are used for the building of the tower, i.e. those who are being made members of the Church of Christ. The maidens together carry each stone, with one at each of the corners and the others in the middle of each side.²²⁶

It is sometimes difficult to discern the origin of the imagery used by Hermas, but the apparent reference here is to the power of the Spirit to draw men to Christ. The passage reminds us of the Johannine, "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."²²⁷ In the Fourth Gospel we frequently find that Christ's *δοξα* which is His death and resurrection, is connected with His power to draw men to Himself.²²⁸

In the passage from the ninth Parable which we have just quoted the reference to the maidens (the Spirit) drawing the stones into the tower (the Church) may perhaps make the reference to the stretching out of hands more than fortuitous. There may in fact be an echo here of Isa. 65:2. This possibility may be confirmed by an apparent reference to the atonement of Christ in the succeeding chapter. The six men are reported to have said to those who were bringing the stones in,

You must on no account put stones into the building, but put them by the side of the tower, that the maidens may bring them in through the gate, and give them over for the building. For if they are not brought in by the hands of these maidens through the gate, they cannot change

²²⁶Sim. 9:4:1. ²²⁷John 12:32, cf. 3:14, 8:28.

²²⁸See Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, pp. 375-9.

their colours.²²⁹

The stones which have not been taken through the gate (i.e. through Christ) are incapable of changing their colours, i.e. of receiving the remission of their sins.²³⁰ This brings us again to the account of the beast that stretched itself on the ground before Hermas. Though a different word is here used (ἐκτείνω), again the reference may not be fortuitous, but may be connected with Num. 21:9, where Moses lifts up the serpent on the stick.

Conclusion.

Our examination of this interesting document from the second century has convinced us that while it reveals heavy overtones of Jewish apocalypticism, the writer was almost certainly a Christian, writing a designedly Christian work. While it is perhaps necessary to admit that in the Shepherd we find in embryo a doctrine of justification by works and works of supererogation, we must recognise that there is always a danger in reading later ideas back into the Fathers. Nonetheless, Hermas is also simple and evangelical. For him Christ is the one access to the kingdom;²³¹ salvation can be found through the glorious Name alone.²³² Christ has come to cleanse the people of their sins through toil,²³³ and it is

²²⁹Sim. 9:4:8. ²³⁰The reference may be to Isa. 1:18.

²³¹Sim. 9:12:4ff. ²³²Vis. 4:2:4. ²³³Sim. 5:6:2f.

through faith in Him that the chosen are saved.²³⁴

The Shepherd apparently belongs to a distinct genre of Christian writings to which the name of "Christian Sibylline" has been given. Jewish Sibyllines had been known as early as the second century B.C. and flourished in Alexandria. These writings combined history and ancient legend perhaps drawn from the widely scattered Sibylline writings. Hermas may consciously have been adapting this style of writing by his combination of the strong eschatology of Jewish apocalyptic, Sibyllines, and Christian doctrine. The Apostolic Fathers occasionally allude to the Sibyll and her witness to Christ or her prophecy,²³⁵ but Hermas was the first of the apostolic Fathers to mention her.²³⁶

²³⁴Vis. 3:8:3.

²³⁵Clement, Quaestiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos, 74; Justin, I Apol. 20, 59.

²³⁶Vis. 2:4.

CHAPTER IV

THE IDEA OF RECAPITULATION IN IRENAEUS OF LUGDUNUM

I. THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN

The Death of Man and the Death of Christ.

"The death of a man cannot be understood apart from the death of Adam and the death of Christ."¹ Thus writes a modern scholar in his summary of the interpretation of life, death, and immortality in the early Fathers. Of none of the theologians of the second century does his statement hold more true than of Irenaeus of Lugdunum. The tragedy of the human condition is that man lives in a nexus of sin, disobedience, and death. All men live in this condition: in this they are in solidarity with Adam, the head of the human race. The humanity of man is one with the humanity of Adam - it is marked by sin and mortality. But when Jesus Christ became man, it was this man, this humanity that He assumed - Adam's humanity. Christ has assumed our frail humanity, in order to redeem it from within. The events of His temptation and crucifixion are therefore of profound soteriological significance for us. In our humanity, viz. in the humanity of Adam, Christ has both perfectly obeyed the Father and been raised from the dead. The power of the Devil over disobedient and mortal man has thus

¹Jaroslav Pelikan, The Shape of Death (New York: 1961), p. 122.

been broken. And if it has been broken at this central point, then it is capable of being broken at all points.

For Irenaeus there is thus a profound inner connexion between our own death and the death of Adam (the representative head of fallen humanity) on the one hand and the death of Christ (the representative head of renewed humanity) on the other. None of the early Fathers has a profounder sense than Irenaeus of the indissoluble connexion between creation and redemption on the one hand, or between the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ on the other. In the following study we shall therefore first consider man as the object of Christ's redemption - man as he was created to be, and man as he has become in his fall. We shall then go on to consider Jesus Christ - first, in His incarnation, i.e. His assumption of Adam's humanity, and second, in His work of recapitulating Adam's defeat and restoring man to obedience and life:

For doing away with the effects of that disobedience of man which had taken place at the beginning by the occasion of a tree, "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;" rectifying that disobedience which had occurred by reason of a tree, through that obedience which was wrought out upon the tree of the cross.²

For Irenaeus, this is the content of the Gospel.

²The primary source, Adversus Haereses, henceforth cited as A.h., when quoted in English will be taken from the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. V, The Writing of Irenaeus, tr. A. Roberts and W. H. Rambaut (Edinburgh: 1869). This volume generally follows the Stieren text, Sancti Irenaei episcopi Lugdunensis quae supersunt omnia, Leipzig 1848-53; the other main edition of the text is Sancti Irenaei episcopi Lugdunensis libros quinque adversus haereses, ed. W. W. Harvey, Cambridge: 1857. The best recent text of Book III of the A.h. is Irenée de Lyons contre les Hérésies, Livre III, introduced and edited with notes by F. Sagnard, O.P., Sources Chrétiennes, Paris 1952.

The Creation of Man.

The two Hands of God. God is the Creator of man. This is the fundamental fact about man, and a truth of profound and at the same time eschatological significance. It is not, however, characteristic of Irenaeus to express the matter in this way. Man, he prefers to say, has been made by the two Hands of God:

It was not angels, therefore, who made us, nor who formed us, neither had angels power to make an image of God, nor any one else, except the Word of the Lord, nor any power remotely distant from the Father of all things. For God did not stand in need of these, in order to the accomplishing of what He had Himself determined with Himself beforehand should be done, as if He did not possess His own hands. For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things.³

The Hands of God are the Son and the Spirit, both uncreated, universally active in all creation, and the source of all that exists.⁴ We shall see later the importance which Irenaeus attaches to the concept of the Son and the Spirit as the two "Hands" of God, and why he chooses to define the creation of man in this particular manner.⁵ We should note in the meantime

³A.h. IV.xx.1; see also John Lawson, The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus (London: 1948), pp. 119-39; Wingren, Man and the Incarnation, pp. 4, 21-4.

⁴A.h. IV. Pref. iv., IV.xx.1.

⁵See Friedrich Loofs, Theophilus von Antiochien Adversus Marcionem und die anderen theologischen Quellen bei Irenaeus (Leipzig: 1930), pp. 16ff. Loofs quite wrongly suggests that the idea of a pre-temporal Trinity was unknown to Irenaeus. See also Lawson, Biblical Theology, pp. 131f., and F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock, "Loofs' theory of Theophilus of Antioch as a source of Irenaeus," in Journal of Theological Studies, 1937, pp. 131-4.

the conclusion of the paragraph from which we have just quoted: "(To the Son and the Spirit) also He speaks, saying, 'Let us make man after our image and likeness;' He taking from Himself the substance of the creatures, and the pattern of things made, and the type of all the adornments in the world."

The image and likeness of God. We find here the creation of man in the image and likeness of God. For Irenaeus this Old Testament concept is basic. It is basic, of course, for Christian theology, but Irenaeus more than any other of the early Fathers makes use of the idea and the term.⁶ Although in several places Irenaeus distinguishes between image and likeness, he almost invariably uses the phrase as a hendiadys.⁷ Scholars have laboriously attempted to define what Irenaeus means by saying that man is made "in the image and likeness of God." Klebba, true to his Roman Catholic interpretation, thinks of it as a donum superadditum which is lost in the Fall and restored by Christ.⁸ On the Protestant side Lawson, for example, quotes from a well-known passage in which Irenaeus, he alleges, "speaks of the human race as 'not gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods.' This divinity," Lawson

⁶Karl Prömm, Christentum als Neuheitserlebnis, Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1930, p. 64 is wrong when he says that this verse, Gen. 1:26, is more frequently quoted than almost any other Old Testament verse in early Christianity.

⁷See Wingren, Man and the Incarnation, pp. 11f.

⁸Ernst Klebba, Die Anthropologie des hl. Irenaeus (Münster: 1894), pp. 26, 33.

affirms, "is described in various terms, among which is the phrase, 'The image and likeness of God.'"⁹ The passage to which Lawson refers¹⁰ goes as follows:

For we cast blame upon Him, because we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods; although God has adopted this course out of His pure benevolence, that no one may impute to Him invidiousness or grudgingness. He declares, "I have said, Ye are gods; and ye are all sons of the Highest." But since we could not sustain the power of divinity (nobis autem potestatem divinitatis balulare non sustinentibus), He adds, "But ye shall die like men," setting forth both truths - the kindness of His free gift, and our weakness. . . . For after His great kindness He graciously conferred good upon us, and made man like to Himself, in their own power (similes sibi suae potestatis homines fecit). . . . For it was necessary, at first, that nature should be exhibited; then, after that, that what was mortal should be conquered and swallowed up by immortality, and the corruptible by incorruptibility, and that man should be made after the image and likeness of God, having received the knowledge of good and evil (Opertuerat autem primo naturam apparere, post deinde vinci et absorbi mortale ab immortalitate, et corruptibile ab incorruptibilitate, et fieri hominem secundum imaginem et similitudinem Dei, agnitione accepta boni et mali.

Lawson states categorically: "Here, at least, 'the image and likeness of God' is hardly an original possession of man." This passage from Irenaeus, however, requires to be studied in its context. Irenaeus is here defining, for one thing, the created and eternal relationship between God and man: God creates, man is created; God gives, man receives. In this particular passage he is speaking to those who were asking why God could not have created man as perfect from the beginning. His answer to this problem is that "created things must be inferior to Him who created them, from the

⁹Lawson, Biblical Theology, p. 210.

¹⁰A.h. IV.xxxviii.4.

very fact of their later origin; for it was not possible for things recently created to have been uncreated."¹¹

Man has been created to grow towards this maturity, viz. the gratuitous bestowal upon him of eternal existence:

Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance be created; and having been created, should receive growth; and having received growth, should be strengthened; and having been strengthened should abound; and having abounded, should recover; and having recovered, should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord.¹²

Irenaeus, that is, willingly grants that man is made for immortality. But he has not been created immortal. He has to grow towards this. When, therefore, Lawson calls the image and likeness of God "hardly an original possession of man," he completely misses the point that Irenaeus is making. "Image and likeness" is not a kind of divinity or immortality bestowed upon man at the beginning, or the endowment with reason and free will, or a gift which is natural to unfallen man.

We have taken Klebba and Lawson to represent on behalf of two traditionally different interpretations of Irenaeus a common misunderstanding of the basic concept of image and likeness in Irenaeus. We shall find that the solution of the matter is much simpler than interpreters have often made it. We must approach the solution, however, from a different angle: enquiring not into the meaning of the phrase as though it were a quality

¹¹A.h. IV.xxxviii.1.

¹²A.h. IV.xx.3.

in man which could be analysed in itself, but rather into the fact to which the phrase refers. ^WThat was Adam created for? This is the essential question. We have already glimpsed at the answer: Adam was created as a child of God to receive growth. And this growth which he was to receive from the Creator is that of which the New Testament also speaks. Adam was created "to attain unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."¹³ Adam was created in order to become like Jesus Christ who is the image and likeness of God. Thus, when Irenaeus looks at what Adam was to become like, viz. Jesus Christ. While he recognises that there is a contrast between Adam and Christ, and that the defeat of Adam in the Fall and the victory of Christ in His resurrection could not be further apart, Irenaeus also sees that there is a profound connexion between Adam and Christ:

And as the protoplast himself, Adam, had his substance from untilled and as yet virgin soil . . . , and was formed by the hand of God, that is, by the Word of God, for "all things were made by Him," and the Lord took dust from the earth and formed man; so did He who is the Word, recapitulating Adam in Himself, rightly receive a birth, enabling Him to gather up Adam (recapitulans in se Adam. . . accipiebat generationem Adae recapitulationis), from Mary, who was as yet a virgin.¹⁴

Irenaeus then goes on to say that God has made this connexion between Adam and Christ

so that there might not be another formation called into being . . . but that the very same formation should be summed up (ut non alia plasmatic fieret . . . sed eadem ipsa recapitularetur), the analogy

¹³Eph. 4:13. ¹⁴A.h. III.xxi.10.

having been preserved.¹⁵

Thus the image and likeness which Adam bore in his creation is the image of God who is Jesus Christ Himself: "Man is created in the image of God, and the image of God is the Son, in whose image man was created. For this reason the Son also appeared in the fulness of time to show how the copy resembles Him."¹⁶ Man is not the image and likeness of God. But he is created in the image and likeness of God. And this image and likeness is Jesus Christ. This is what Adam was created for.

The connexion and distinction between God and man. In his doctrine of the creation of Adam in the image and likeness of God we thus see that Irenaeus at one point stresses the connexion between man (Adam) and Christ. But at another point he asserts without reserve that there is a created and eternal distinction between God and man. God creates; man is created. God gives life; man grows. The difference between God and man is that man has a Lord over him, but God does not; God originates life, and man can only receive it: "For life does not arise from us, nor from our own nature; but it is bestowed according to the grace of God."¹⁷ If man were to live in voluntary obedience to God in this relationship, he would have the

¹⁵Ibid. Cf. A.h. V.xxi.1-2.

¹⁶Proof of the Apostolic Preaching, henceforth cited as Proof, is quoted from the translation by J. Armitage Robinson, St. Irenaeus, The Apostolic Preaching (London: 1920). See here Proof, 22.

¹⁷A.h. II.xxiv.3.

capacity to grow as a child in creation, and to receive the gift of immortality or longitudo dierum as Irenaeus calls it:

For from the very fact of these things having been created, (it follows) that they are not uncreated; but by their continuing in being throughout a long course of ages, they shall receive a faculty of the uncreated, through the gratuitous bestowal of eternal existence upon them by God. And thus in all things God has the pre-eminence, who alone is uncreated, the first of all things, and the primary cause of the existence of all, while all other things remain under God's subjection. But being in subjection to God is continuance in immortality, and immortality is the glory of the uncreated One.¹⁸

One expression which we find in Irenaeus of the Lordship of the Creator over man is the ethical factor of the will of the Creator and the obedience of man:

But so that the man should not have thoughts of grandeur, and become lifted up, as if he had no lord, because of the dominion that had been given to him, and the freedom, and fall into sin against God his creator, overstepping his bounds, and take up an attitude of self-conceited arrogance towards God, a law was given him by God, that he might know that he had for lord the Lord of all.¹⁹

As we shall see frequently in Irenaeus, life and obedience are integrally associated. The man who does the will of God lives and grows.

Growth. This connexion between growth and life is a common one in Irenaeus. Man has been made to grow. He is a child in God's creation:

So, having made the man lord of the earth and everything in it, He made him in secret lord also of the servants in it. They, however, were in their full development, while the lord, that is, man, was a little one; for he was a child, and had need to grow so as to come to his full perfection.²⁰

Growth is the characteristic of a child. And man, as created by God, is to

¹⁸A.h. V.iii.1. ¹⁹Proof, 15. ²⁰Proof, 12.

grow to the maturity of manhood which the Creator wills for him. But he can grow only as long as he is obedient to the will of the Father. Life and obedience belong together. Disobedience brings death, the loss of the capacity to grow. When man yields to temptation, as Adam did at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he "plunges into mortality." In creating man God has given him the commandment that obedience is good and disobedience evil:

It is good to obey God, and to believe in Him, and to keep His commandment, and this is the life of man; as not to obey God is evil, and this is death. Since God, therefore, gave to man such mental power (*magnanimitatem*), man knew both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience.²¹

The man who deliberately chooses evil "kills himself in the inner man."²²

The humanity of man. There are thus for Irenaeus two aspects of the humanity of the man who has been created by God. The physical aspect of his humanity is life itself: man receives life, God gives it. He lives in complete dependence upon the Giver of life. The ethical aspect of his humanity is his obedience to the commandment of the Creator. If man lived wholly in accordance with the will of his Creator, he would be immortal: obedience and life are inseparable. But if man breaks the commandment of the Creator, he falls into death.²³

Obedience and life. We have frequently touched on the polarity in the relationship between God and man. God creates; man is created. God is

²¹A.h. IV.xxxix.1. ²²Ibid. ²³Proof, 11-17.

Lord, man is His "child." "He was a child, and had need to grow so as to come to his full perfection."²⁴ Man is the son of the Creator, but is not yet full grown. We shall soon notice the significance which Irenaeus attaches to man's status in creation as a child. In the meantime we can say this, that it is a characteristic of the child that it has to grow. It is also the responsibility of the child to obey. But Adam yielded to the temptation of the Devil and at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil disobeyed the will of his Creator, and thereby lost the capacity to grow, i.e. to move towards the destiny which had been appointed to him by the Creator. Before we discuss this aspect of Irenaeus's anthropology, we will conclude the present section with some words about Irenaeus's interpretation of the Devil, and about his general understanding of man in contrast with that of the Gnostics.

Disobedience and death. Irenaeus develops an important theological conception in his interpretation of the Devil as the Liar who opposes the Creator. God is truth and reality, and to be in obedience to God is to be in truth and life. But to oppose the Creator is to be in a lie. Such is the nature of the adversary of man, the Devil. In his envy of the Creator he seeks to destroy man by removing him from the sphere in which he has life, i.e. by tempting man to disobey God, but he can do so only by lying

²⁴Proof, 12.

about the offer which he can make to man. Irenaeus thus quotes with emphatic approval the statement of our Lord about the Devil: "He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him."²⁵ That is to say, at the moment when the Devil tempted the "child," he easily beguiled him, but he lied. Satan has power, and by his enticement he has the child of God in his power, but he has no right. We shall later see the significance of this statement in relation to the idea (not found in Irenaeus) of the death of Christ as a ransom paid to the Devil. The Devil has no claim upon God, for he is the wicked, cruel, and guilty thief who has stolen God's possession. There is no excuse for man's disobedience. It was freely and voluntarily chosen - man knew both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience. But the Devil has no right to God's creation. He is the powerful Enemy who has taken man unjustly into his possession.

The Gnostic view of man. We have attempted to see something of what Irenaeus says concerning the nature of man, for we shall better understand what he means when he talks about the incarnation, Christ's entering into our human nature, and about the redemption of our humanity on the cross. Irenaeus, however, was also concerned in all that he had to say about man to point out the difference between the Biblical view of man and that of the Gnostics. Man consists of body and soul together, or rather, perhaps,

²⁵John 8:44; see A.h. V.xxii.2, cf. V.xxiii.2, V.xxiii.1.

of body, soul, and the Spirit,²⁶ but his body is not the evil element, as opposed to his soul, the divine element. In contrast with the Gnostic depreciation of the body, Irenaeus exalts the scriptural understanding of man as a unity. The Gnostic subdivision of mankind into the hylic, psychic, and pneumatic is vigorously repudiated by Irenaeus. The Gnostics held that the body was incapable of redemption, and therefore the hylic man had no hope of salvation. The psychic man was capable of being saved, but only in so far as he mortified the body, while the pneumatic man, by reason of his superior esoteric knowledge, is clearly saved. The Gnostics had interpreted I Cor. 15:50, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," to mean that the body of man cannot participate in redemption. But Irenaeus defines those who are of flesh and blood as "those who have not that which saves and forms us into life eternal," i.e. those who do not have the Spirit of God in themselves.²⁷ Man as man, made by the Creator in His image and likeness, is in his whole being capable of redemption. But first we must now examine the nature of the fallen man who has to be restored to purity by Christ in His work of recapitulation.

²⁶On the question of whether Irenaeus has a dichotomous (body + soul) or a trichotomous (body + soul + Spirit) view of man, see the helpful interpretation in Wingren, Man and the Incarnation, p. 153f. and cf. Lawson, Biblical Theology, p. 206f.

²⁷A.h. V. ix. 1.

The Fall of Man.

For Irenaeus, the tragedy of man is that he is a sinner. But man's sin is not to be defined in any abstract way. Man is sinner because he interposes his will against the will of the Creator. To oppose the Creator is to oppose the One who has made and continues to sustain all things, i.e. it is to oppose reality. Man's rebellion against his Creator is therefore that which opposes reality - it is a lie. What man has done is to yield to the enticement of the Devil, "Ye shall not surely die." But the Devil lied when he said this.

The origin of evil. We should notice carefully how Irenaeus goes about his interpretation of the Fall of man at this point. In the first place he adheres strictly to the narrative of the Fall in Genesis 3, and makes no attempt to argue about how evil came into the pure creation of God. He simply accepts that the scriptural narrative is the sufficient revelation of God in regard to the mystery of sin.²⁸ The presence of the Serpent in the primal creation is a fact which Irenaeus neither debates nor attempts to explain. He does, however, maintain - and this is the second point which we should note - that it was the Devil's envy of the life that man had received from God which prompted him to set himself against God and man.²⁹

²⁸A.h. IV.xx.5.

²⁹A.h. V.xxiv.4. See also Klebba, Die Anthropologie des hl. Irenaeus, pp. 48ff.

The envy of the devil. The devil looked upon man with jealousy because of the many favours bestowed by God upon him, and so led man to disobey the commandment of God.³⁰ In his temptation of man, however, he lied. He promised man the immortality that God the Creator alone could bestow. But even man's very life, let alone the possibility of his immortality, depends wholly on his continuing to receive this gift from God: "It is not possible to live apart from life, and the means of life is found in fellowship with God; but fellowship with God is to know God, and to enjoy His goodness."³¹ The devil does not have either this life or this immortality to offer, and in pretending to do so to Adam, he lied. The consequence of man's deception by the lies of the devil is the fearful one of mortality: after the Fall man is subject to death. We shall discuss this aspect of the Fall shortly, but at the present we want simply to emphasise the inner connexion between the devil's lie and man's subjection to death.

The devil as the enemy of God. We are to observe this point carefully. When man submits to the untruthful offer and enticement of the devil, he disrupts the natural relationship which God willed to exist in the beginning:

According to nature, then - that is, according to creation, so to speak - we are all sons of God, because we have all been created by God. But with respect to obedience and doctrine we are not all the sons of God: those only are so who believe in Him and do His will.

³⁰Proof, 16. ³¹A.h. IV.xx.5.

And these who do not believe, and do not obey His will, are sons and angels of the devil.³²

In this sense, therefore, Gustaf Aulén is right to say in his essay on the atonement in regard to Irenaeus: "There is, then, enmity between mankind and God, and enmity which can only be taken away through an atonement, a reconciliation."³³ In support of this statement he quotes Irenaeus: "For that thing is reconciled which had formerly been in enmity."³⁴ It is true that man is now in a different relationship since the Fall with the Creator. But Aulén goes on to misinterpret the nature of this relationship between God and man as we find it in Irenaeus:

It is to be emphasised that this view of the atonement has regularly a dualistic background - namely, the reality of forces of evil, which are hostile to the Divine will. Consequently, so far as the sphere of these forces extends, there is enmity between God and the world.³⁵

Irenaeus does not in fact say this. Of man's wilful rebellion against God and his corrupted nature he is in no doubt: but the real opposition is between God and the devil. God is Creator; the devil is Satan, the rebel.³⁶ God is the Creator of reality and the source of all life; the devil is the "father of lies" and the adversary of man. The opposition between God and His enemy, the devil, is complete and relentless, and man's humanity is the sphere in which this battle takes its most vigorous form.

³²A.h. IV.xli.2,3.

³³Gustaf Aulén, Christus Victor, tr. A. G. Hebert (London: 1953), p. 40.

³⁴A.h. V.xiv.3. ³⁵Christus Victor, p. 51. ³⁶Proof, 16.

The loss of humanity. Man's rebellion against his Creator is an unnatural one. It begins with the acceptance of a lie, and it continues in active hostility towards God and towards his fellow man. This is to say that man's humanity since the Fall is a diminished and unnatural humanity. The gift of life and fellowship with the Creator is not a donum superadditum which is lost with the Fall. What is lost is man's true and primal humanity. In his disobedience to God he has become a thrall or bonds slave of death and sin, no longer a free, responsive, and responsible "child." His destiny, which is to grow to maturity in the image and similitude of God, has now become incapable of achievement by man himself.³⁷ This is not to say that fallen man is incapable of free and independent action, despite his loss of humanity. Yet Irenaeus has from time to time been accused, quite unfairly, of a Pelagian attitude to man's ability to act as an independent agent. J. Werner, for example, cites a passage in which Irenaeus is discussing the freedom of man's will as an instance of his Pelagianism: "God made man a free agent from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God." Further on in this passage Irenaeus writes that those who do evil "shall receive the just judgment of God, because they did not work good when they had it in their power to do so."³⁸

³⁷See Klebba, Die Anthropologie des hl. Irenaeus, p. 33.

³⁸A.h. IV.xxxvii.1; see J. Werner, Der Paulinismus des hl. Irenaeus (Leipzig: 1889), p. 131, and also the discussion in Lawson, Biblical Theology, pp. 221-9.

Irenaeus, however, is not prepared to exalt the grace of God on which man wholly depends by denying that man has the capacity for independent action. The disobedience of Adam has deprived him of his true humanity, indeed has corrupted him and bound him in subjection to sin and death, but it has not turned him into an inanimate object. Man still lives, because God continues to give him life, even though man's life is now no longer able to develop to maturity. But he is still capable of independent action and of fulfilling the natural law.³⁹

What, then, has happened to man as a result of the Fall? We have said that he has lost the humanity which he possessed in the primal creation. But what does this mean, if we assert that even fallen man has still the capacity to follow certain of the divine commandments?

Sin and death. Irenaeus defines the corruption of man in terms of sin and death, and the two are integrally related.⁴⁰

But the communion with God is life and light, and enjoyment of all the benefits which He has in store. But on as many as, according to their own choice, depart from God, He inflicts that separation from Himself which they have chosen of their own accord. But separation from God is death, and separation from light is darkness; and separation from God consists in the loss of all the benefits which He has in store.⁴¹

The corruption of man, that is, can be defined in its ethical aspect as sin,

³⁹A.h. IV.xiii.1, IV.xv.1.

⁴⁰W. Bonwetsch, Die Theologie des Irenäus (Gütersloh: 1925), defines sin in Irenaeus as "ein Bestandtheil des Todes," a component part of death.

⁴¹A.h. IV.xxvii.2. †

and in its physical aspect as death. Man's sin is his selfish attempt to anticipate the benefits which God has in store for him. But this assertion of independence on the part of man produces only bondage. It is a voluntary and wilful act on the part of man:

Those persons, therefore, who have apostatized from the light given by the Father, and transgressed the law of liberty, have done so through their own fault, since they have been created free agents, and possessed of power over themselves.⁴²

But the consequence of this freely chosen act of rebellion is that man has ceased to be free. The race has been brought into a condition of enslavement as a result of this primal act of disobedience. Sin spreads its poison through Adam to all his progeny: "By means of our first parents we were all brought into bondage."⁴³ Here again we see how Irenaeus resists speculation, and is content to rest only on the Biblical record. He is not concerned to speculate how the sin of Adam brought the corruption of sin upon the whole human race, but is content to accept the Pauline interpretation of Christ and Adam as the two representative heads of humanity. The condition of our humanity apart from Christ is the same as Adam's when he fell: bondage in sin. In reading of what has happened to Adam in the past, we read of what is true in ourselves. We are in chains, incapable of releasing ourselves:

For as in the beginning he (sc. the devil) enticed man to transgress

⁴²A.h. IV.xxxix.3.

⁴³A.h. IV.xxii.1; cf. III.xxiii.7; III.xxiii.2, III.xviii.7.

his Maker's law, and thereby got him into his power; yet his power consists in transgression and apostasy, and with these he bound man to himself; so again, on the other hand, it was necessary that through man himself he should, when conquered, be bound with the same chains with which he had bound man, in order that man, being set free, might return to his Lord, leaving to him (Satan) those bonds by which he himself had been fettered, that is, sin.⁴⁴

If the ethical aspect of man's fall may be defined as sin, the physical aspect may likewise be defined as death. Sin and death are integrally related. The connexion between sin and death is seen in the creation narrative itself. The Creator had said to Adam, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."⁴⁵ Man was created to enjoy the freedom and life of creation, but he could do so only in obedience to the will of the Creator. Obedience and life belong together. But death and sin likewise belong to one another. To violate the commandment of the Creator is to become subject to death, and the man who in disobedience chooses evil and his own self-will plunges into death - latenter semetipsum occidit hominem.⁴⁶ Irenaeus closely connects sin and death in his discussion of the falsehood of the devil, and having exposed the three lies of the enemy of man in the Garden, he says,

But that God was true, and the serpent a liar, was proved by the result, death having passed upon them who had eaten. For along with the fruit they did also fall under the power of death, because they did eat in disobedience; and disobedience to God entails death (inobedientia autem Dei mortem inferit).⁴⁷

When man by his disobedience cuts himself off from God he cuts him-

⁴⁴A.h. V.xxvi.3. ⁴⁵Gen. 2:16f.

⁴⁶A.h. V.xxxix.1. ⁴⁷A.h. V.xciii.1.

self off from the source of life, the Spirit of God. These are the "conditions" of human existence:

And He laid down for him certain conditions: so that, if he kept the command of God, then he would always remain as he was, that is, immortal; but if he did not, he would become mortal, melting into earth, whence his frame had been taken.⁴⁸

In one passage Irenaeus discusses the relationship between life and death, and distinguishes between the two gifts which were given to man in God's primal creation, the breath of life and the gift of the Spirit. He quotes Isaiah: "Thus saith the Lord, who made heaven and established it, who founded the earth and the things therein, and gave breath to the people upon it, and Spirit to those walking upon it," and interprets the passage to mean that God has given the breath of life to all people on earth, "but the Spirit is theirs alone who tread down earthly desires,"⁴⁹ i.e. the Spirit belongs only to those who remain in the purity and obedience of the primal creation. But the breath of life of which Isaiah speaks "increases for a short period, and continues for a certain time; after that it takes its departure, leaving its former abode destitute of breath." When the Spirit of God is in a man, he is held in life and can never perish. This, however, is precisely the unnatural and abnormal thing that has entered God's creation as a result of man's disobedience. Sin and death have gained entry into the pure creation, and "he who was made a living soul forfeited life when he turned aside to what was evil" (ὁ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν γεγωνώς, ῥήμας

⁴⁸Proof 15. ⁴⁹Isa. 42:5.; A.h. V.xii.2.

ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον, ἀπώλεσε τὴν ζωὴν).⁵⁰ The abnormality of death in creation means that what God created to be alive has now become lifeless.⁵¹ We are to be clear, however, why disobedient man is now subject to death. It is because he is separated from the giver of life that man has lost life: "Separation from God is death, and separation from light is darkness" (χωρισμός δὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ θάνατος· καὶ χωρισμός φωτός σκότος).⁵²

Over against the frequent modern interpretation of death as a natural biological phenomenon which has no moral or ethical significance, Irenaeus always understands death as the supreme enemy, the baleful power which holds man helpless in its grasp. Death is the "enemy of man," and no king, but a robber and a murderer.⁵³ That is to say, Irenaeus interprets death ethically as the destruction that man has brought upon himself by the direct judgment of the living God. To say that man is mortal or subject to death is to say also that he is condemned by God on account of his sinfulness. The disobedient man who has ungratefully despised the will of his Maker is now the recipient of His just judgment.⁵⁴ It is part of this judgment that God has rejected sinful men and ceased to regard them as His sons:

Those who do not obey Him being disinherited by Him have ceased to be His sons . . . when (men) believe and are subject to God, and go on and keep His doctrine, they are the sons of God; but when they have apostatised and fallen into transgression, they are ascribed to their chief, the devil - to him who first became the cause of apostasy to himself, and afterwards to others.⁵⁵

⁵⁰Ibid. ⁵¹A.h. V.xii.3. ⁵²A.h. V.xvii.2.

⁵³A.h. III.xviii.7. ⁵⁴A.h. IV.xi.2. ⁵⁵A.h. IV.xli.3.

Yet such is the sovereign grace of the Creator that He will use even death itself, His enemy and man's, to be the means of destroying another enemy, sin. Irenaeus touches from time to time on the way by which God as the master Workman plays His enemies off against one another. Death can in fact be regarded as a demonstration of the mercy of God in terminating life and thereby the possibility of continuance in sin. God has visited rebellious man with His judgment and deprived him of life, not because He envies man this life,

but He set a bound to his state of sin, by interposing death, and thus causing sin to cease, putting an end to it by the dissolution of the flesh, which should take place in the earth, so that man, ceasing at length to live to sin, and dying to it, might begin to live to God.⁵⁶

God has used even death itself as the means by which man may be rescued from the grasp of his possessor, the devil.⁵⁷ In this sense even the expulsion from paradise has been turned by the purpose of God to man's good. Man will not continue a sinner for ever, and even in his frailty and bondage God has mercy upon him, and gives him tokens of His heavenly blessing and a hope of final restoration in Jesus Christ.

Man has caused himself irremediable harm by his sinful apostasy: he has vitiated his status as a child in creation, and lost the capacity to grow to his maturity in the image and likeness of God. In his bondage to a new lord, the devil, he is incapable of coming to his original destiny, and

⁵⁶A.h. III.xxiii.6.

⁵⁷Cf. A.h. V.xxi.3, III.xx.1, III.xxv.3, and Proof, 60.

instead of living in the freedom of the sons of God he now encounters the will of God in the form of the constraint of the law and the commandments. By these God makes His will known among men, even among those who do not speak of God at all, or take Him into their reckoning. Since sin has come into man's life, God has controlled the onslaught of sin by interposing the law and forcing man into a reluctant obedience to the will of the sovereign Lord. Man is in bonds. Sin, death, and the law hold him fast. But man also longs to be released - to become himself. The mission of the eternal Son of God is to remove the bonds of man's slavery, in order that man should follow God without fetters (sine vinculis).⁵⁸ It is, therefore, to a study of that mission in which the eternal Son of God assumed man's bondage in order to restore him that we now turn.

II. THE INCARNATION AND RECAPITULATION OF CHRIST

The Incarnation of Christ.

In the Preface to Book V of the Adversus haereses Irenaeus concisely expresses the purpose of the work of Christ in His incarnation and recapitulation: "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself." We are to take both sides of this statement as seriously as Irenaeus does in all his writings. Jesus Christ became what we are. No writer in the

⁵⁸A.h. IV.xiii.2.

second century of the Christian era asserts so vigorously as does Irenaeus that Jesus Christ was "made of a woman, made under the law." He not only became man, but He came fully into our place; He took the bonds of man's slavery, sin and death. But Jesus Christ has done this in order that we might become again what He is Himself, viz. the elect, beloved, and perfectly obedient Son of God.⁵⁹ In no other writer of the second century do we find so powerfully asserted the unity of the incarnation and redemption of Christ on the one hand, and on the other the significance for our salvation of the humanity of Christ.

The purpose of the incarnation. There has, however, been a tendency on the part of a number of scholars to isolate and exalt the doctrine of the incarnation in Irenaeus as the dominant motif of his concept of salvation. P. Beuzart, for example, asserts that the only new contribution which Irenaeus made in theology was his emphasis on the incarnation rather than on the cross as the means by which eternal life is brought to men. Other scholars have also alleged that in Irenaeus the incarnation has usurped the place of the death for sin in the scheme of redemption.⁶⁰ But we are not so to divide the theology of Irenaeus. For him the essential question to which

⁵⁹A.h. IV.xiii.2.

⁶⁰p. Beuzart, Essai sur la Théologie d'Irénée (Paris: 1908), pp. 83-102; R. Seeberg, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte (Leipzig: 1922), Vol. I, pp. 411-3; W. Boussset, Kyrios Christos (Göttingen: 1913), p. 418f.; Hans Lietzmann, Founding of the Church Universal (London: 1938), p. 283; Lawson, Biblical Theology, p. 63, 193. On the other side see Wingren, Man and the Incarnation, p. 121.

Christian faith has an answer to give is, Ad quid enim descendebat? This is to say, as Aulén reminds us, that the incarnation is "the indispensable basis on which the subsequent work of redemption rests."⁶¹ It is wholly to misunderstand what Irenaeus has to say about the atoning work of Christ if we either insist that his theology is one of redemption through incarnation or contrast the incarnation and the atonement by minimizing the part which the cross has to play. Irenaeus cannot understand what Christ has done on the cross apart from what He is in His incarnation.

Those theologians who assert the priority and supremacy in Irenaeus of redemption through incarnation can continue their misrepresentation only by wresting his statements from their context. Consider the following passages:

How shall man pass into God, unless God has passed into man (quomodo enim homo transiet in Deum, si non Deus in hominem)?

and

By no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality, unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality. But how could we be joined to incorruptibility and immortality, unless, first, incorruptibility and immortality had become that which we also are?⁶²

To take statements such as these to prove that Irenaeus has so far exaggerated the significance of the incarnation that he has evacuated the cross of its unique character is to fly directly in the face of evidence. For Irenaeus the incarnation and atoning work of Christ on the cross are dif-

⁶¹Christus Victor, p. 45; cf. p. 49. ⁶²A.h. IV.xciii.4, III.xix.1.

ferent aspects of the same act. The death of Christ has the significance it has because the Incarnate One is who He is. This point emerges clearly in a passage of great importance in which Irenaeus is describing the significance of Christ's incarnation in our sinful, frail humanity:

If, not having been made flesh, He did appear as if flesh, His work was not a true one. But what He did appear, that He also was: God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man (Deus, hominis antiquam plasmationem in se recapitulans, ut occideret quidem peccatum, evacualet autem mortem, et vivificaret hominem.⁶³)

This is the work of the eternal Son. It is to bind the powers that hold man in bondage and deprive him of life, sin, death, and the devil. This is why Christ has appeared in the flesh, and the One who is in our humanity is the obedient Son, whose obedience recapitulates the ancient formation of man, and finally leads to His passion: "The apostate angel is . . . vanquished by the Son of man keeping the commandment of God."⁶⁴ But also, "It is clear that the Lord suffered death, in obedience to His Father."⁶⁵

Again and again we shall find in Irenaeus that incarnation and atonement cannot be separated. Thus, in speaking of the true appearance in our flesh of the Son of God, he states:

It is plain, then, that Paul knew no other Christ besides Him alone, who both suffered, and was buried, and rose again, who also was born, and whom he speaks of as a man. For after remarking, "But if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead," he continues, rendering the

⁶³A.h. III.xviii.7. Rashdall in his *Idea of Atonement*, p. 238, says, "It is difficult to find in such vague expressions an idea capable of definite formulation." In the total context these expressions are admirably clear and constitute a concise summary of Irenaeus's theology.

⁶⁴A.h. V.xxi.3. ⁶⁵A.h. V.xxiii.2.

reason of His incarnation, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead."⁶⁶

For convenience of analysis we shall examine first in the following section the incarnation of Christ, not, in Aulén's phrase as "the necessary preliminary to the atoning work,"⁶⁷ but as constituting, together with the cross, one aspect of Christ's atonement. We shall then conclude with a second section on the recapitulating work of Christ, in which we shall see how Irenaeus maintains that it is the Incarnate who thus restores the ancient creation.

The humanity of Adam and of Christ. Irenaeus is in no doubt about the meaning of the incarnation or the nature of Jesus Christ. He is the Christ who descended from above,⁶⁸ Immanuel, and not a mere man:

But in every respect, too, He is man, the formation of God; and thus He took up man into Himself, the invisible becoming visible, the incomprehensible becoming comprehensible, the impassible becoming capable of suffering, and the Word being made man, thus summing up all things in Himself.⁶⁹

In the incarnation God became man. There is, however, a unique factor in the incarnation. Of all mankind, Jesus alone is God. It is this unique fact - God is man - that constitutes Jesus Christ's character as the Redeemer of man. History has entered a new phase.⁷⁰

⁶⁶A.h. III.xviii.3; cf. Lawson, Biblical Theology, p. 154.

⁶⁷Christus Victor, p. 36. ⁶⁸A.h. III.xvi.2. ⁶⁹A.h. III.xvi.6.

⁷⁰A.h. III.x.2, "For all things had entered upon a new phase, the Word arranging after a new manner the advent in the flesh, that He might win back to God that man who had departed from God."

On the one hand Jesus Christ is wholly and truly man. Jesus Christ has assumed our humanity, that is, the fallen humanity of Adam, bound in sin and subject to death. Jesus Christ has come into the line of humanity which began with Adam. He has done so because Adam was destined by God to come to life, and Jesus Christ has come to redeem this Adam, fallen mankind. The Creator was not content to form a new man. It is the ancient formation, antiqua plasmatio, that God restores in the incarnation.⁷¹ The eternal Word has come into the flesh of Adam: Jesus hungers, thirsts, and knows anxiety, the pain of separation from God, and death. Jesus Christ has taken our humanity, but He has done so in order to restore and renew it, by infusing into it the undefeated and victorious life of God. It is for this reason that Irenaeus gives the Virgin Birth a place of such importance in regard to the humanity of Jesus, as opposed to later theology which pointed to the Virgin Birth as a proof of the divinity of Jesus.⁷² There is a direct connexion between the creation of Adam and the incarnation of Christ:

From this earth, then, while it was still virgin, God took dust and fashioned the man, the beginning of humanity. So the Lord, summing up afresh this man, reproduced the scheme of his incarnation, being born of a virgin by the will and wisdom of God, that He too might copy the incarnation of Adam, and man might be made, as was written in the beginning, according to the image and likeness of God.⁷³

⁷¹A.h. III.xviii.7.

⁷²The emphasis in the time of Irenaeus is still on birth rather than on Virgin; see Bousset, Kyrios Christos, p. 427, n.2; W. Scherer, "Zur Mariologie des hl. Irenaeus," in Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie, 1923, p. 122.

⁷³Proof, 32.

Adam was taken from the virgin soil and had no earthly father; Christ was born of a virgin and had no earthly father. The Virgin Birth thus attests to the humanity of Jesus. His birth and His humanity are connected on the level of humanity with the birth and humanity of Adam.

What is the meaning of Christ's birth of the virgin? It is that God purposed to restore the old and spoiled rather than to create something wholly new; it is,

that there might not be another formation called into being, nor any other which should require to be saved, but that the very same formation should be summed up, the analogy having been preserved (ἵνα μὴ ἄλλη πλάσις γένηται, μηδὲ ἄλλο τὸ σωζόμενον ἢ, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἐκείνος ἀνακεφαλαιωθῇ, τηρουμένης τῆς ὁμοιότητος).⁷⁴

We find this idea frequently in Irenaeus: "And just as it was through a virgin who disobeyed that man was stricken and fell and died, so too it was through the Virgin, who obeyed the word of God, that man, resuscitated by life, received life."⁷⁵ The man who is restored to life is Adam in the corporate sense of the word, mankind. This is why Christ has been born of the Virgin; and this is why Jesus's humanity is Adam's. The line of humanity stretches without interruption from Adam to Christ. In the birth of Jesus we see the likeness between Him and Adam. Christ has come to seek and save the lost. He has not come to be the pioneer of a new humanity but the Redeemer of the old. Hence Luke has traced the descent of our Lord from Adam,

connecting the end with the beginning, and implying that it is He who

⁷⁴A.h. III.xxi.10. ⁷⁵Proof, 33.

has summed up in Himself all nations dispersed from Adam downwards, and all languages and generations of men, together with Adam himself.⁷⁶

Christ's sufferings as man. In another context, as we shall see in fuller detail later, Irenaeus again stresses the humanity of Jesus, that is, in relation to the physical sufferings of Christ on the cross. The Gnostic Christology was docetic, and taught that Christ could not be subject to suffering, though the man Jesus could. Irenaeus on the other hand repeatedly affirms the unity of God and man in Christ, and His sufferings in our humanity: "All, therefore, are outside of the (Christian) dispensation, who, under pretext of knowledge, understand that Jesus was one, and Christ another." Jesus Christ is one and undivided, "who shall come in the same flesh in which He suffered, revealing the glory of the Father."⁷⁷ If Jesus Christ did not suffer in our humanity, then we have nothing to thank Him for. For the uniqueness of His sufferings is that "He as man contending for the fathers (pro patribus, ἀντὶ τῶν πατέρων), and through obedience doing away with disobedience completely: for He bound the strong man, and set free the weak, and endowed His own handiwork with salvation, by destroying sin."⁷⁸

Here, as consistently throughout Irenaeus, we see how integrally Christ's incarnation and atonement are connected. Christ has become what we are, in order that we may become what He is Himself. Christ's assumption

⁷⁶A.h. III.xxii.3. ⁷⁷A.h. III.xvi.8. ⁷⁸A.h. III.xviii.6.

of our humanity is the means by which we become what He is, viz. the Son of God in perfect obedience and pure humanity.⁷⁹

The Lord, summing up afresh this man, took the same dispensation of entry into flesh . . . that He also should show forth the likeness of Adam's entry into flesh, and that there should be that which was written in the beginning, man after the image and likeness of God.⁸⁰

Christ in His incarnation is true man, the recapitulated Adam, and in His saving humanity, temptations, and death, He encounters the Destroyer of man and leads him captive.

Jesus as God in the flesh. We have now dealt with the emphasis on the humanity of Jesus which we find in Irenaeus. On the other hand, however, the perfection and power which Jesus Christ has are both dependent on God who dwells in Him. Jesus is pure and whole man in whom we see the growth to which God called Adam in full maturity. But there is something in Jesus Christ which was not even a potentiality in Adam. Alone of mankind, Jesus is God. The strength which He has in the face of His temptation and enemy is God's strength, and the victory which He wins over death is God's victory, the triumph of the Creator of life over the "man-slayer." Jesus is God in the flesh; the Creator has come to earth as man. The One who has made all things by His power has Himself come into His creation in order to purify it from within. His humanity is that of ourselves, but His divinity is the same as that of the Father.

⁷⁹See George S. Hendry, The Gospel of the Incarnation (London: 1959), p. 61; Mozley, The Doctrine of the Atonement, p. 105.

⁸⁰Proof, 32.

Irenaeus has comparatively little to say about the pre-existence of the Son of God, not because He has difficulty with the doctrine, or has rejected it in favour of a one-sided emphasis on the incarnate life of the Son, but because the pre-existent Son cannot be defined as He is per semetipsum, but of necessity in relation to His ministry. Irenaeus thus affirms that Christ exists before all and goes before all, ever present with God the Father.⁸¹ But here again we note the anti-speculative strain in Irenaeus, for even in his discussion of the pre-existence of Christ he points to the earthly ministry of the Son of God;

For inasmuch as He had a pre-existence as a saving being, it was necessary that what might be saved should be called into existence, in order that the Being who saves should not exist in vain (cum enim praexisteret salvans, oportebat et quod salvaretur fieri, uti non vacuum sit salvans).⁸²

We have seen how, in his controversy with the docetic Christology of the Gnostics, Irenaeus stressed the unity of the divine and the human in Christ and of Christ's incarnation and atoning work. The Ebionites, on the other hand, solved the problem of the divinity of Christ by denying it altogether. They rejected the doctrine that Christ had been born of the Virgin.⁸³ For Irenaeus, however, the supreme miracle is what we may call the miracle of humanity, in a double sense: it is the miracle that man is, exists, has life and breath, viz. that God holds him in life; and it is the

⁸¹A.h. II.xxii.4, III.xviii.1, IV.xx.1,3,7, and especially II.xxiv.3.

⁸²A.h. III.xxii.3. ⁸³A.h. I.xxvi.1, III.xi.7, III.xxi.1.

miracle that "God was made man,"⁸⁴ viz. that when man was bound in sin and death God entered His world as recapitulator to live the pure and uncorrupted life of the obedient Son. The means whereby this miracle was achieved was the birth of Christ of the Virgin Mary, which from this aspect too is to be regarded as testifying to the humanity of Christ.

Christ's assumption of our sinful humanity. "God was made man" - Christ is in every respect man. His humanity is the same as our humanity. Christ, however, is not a sinner. Does this mean, that He has not wholly shared in our human nature, since we are sinners? Has Christ at this point abstained from completely and decisively identifying Himself with fallen man? Christ, it is true, lacks sin; but this does not make Him less than human. For it is sin itself that makes man less than human. Sin has corrupted man, and made him less than truly human. If, therefore, Christ had been a sinner, He would have been less than man. This is the sense of what Irenaeus says, when, quoting Colossians, he states that the Apostle says, "Ye have been reconciled in the body of His flesh," because

the righteous flesh has reconciled that flesh which was being kept under bondage in sin, and brought it into friendship with God (justa caro reconciliavit eam carnem, quae in peccato detinebatur, et in amicitiam adduxit Deo.)⁸⁵

The humanity which Jesus has is not the fallen and corrupted humanity of the

⁸⁴A.h. III.xxi.1.

⁸⁵A.h. V.xiv.2, cf. III.xxi.4.

defeated Adam, but the pure humanity of God's primal creation.

The sinlessness of Jesus. The question of the sinlessness of Jesus is a persistent and acute one alike in modern as in early theology. If we may take Nels F. S. Ferré to represent a characteristic strand in modern theology, we find the following definition of sinlessness:

Sinlessness is a bloodless category, making an anemic savior. What matters is the reality of his struggles, that he was in all things like us, and that victory is possible with God and is indeed a reality in Jesus' life.⁸⁶

Professor Ferré develops this point in a letter addressed to the writer:

I have real difficulty with a sinless Jesus. One is my historical feeling that Jesus meant what he said: that only One is good, that is God. Another problem is that either Jesus was kept sinless by his divine nature in which case he had no full human experience, or else Pelagius was right that human nature can remain sinless. Jesus then came not to Palestine, but to Paradise. He did not receive our Adamic nature but, if we may speak at least symbolically, our pre-Adamic nature. I can not see either how the incarnation can be full and avail unless Jesus truly shared the only problem we really have, namely, our sinful nature. I think, as a matter of fact, that we tend to sell God short, and do not connect the incarnation with either creation or the purpose of history when we insist upon Jesus being sinless in principle. I do not want under any circumstances to take away the power of the incarnation but to make it more real and powerful. What we need is to understand the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives to effect basic changes in us and in human history.⁸⁷

This argument raises some radical problems. Does Jesus receive our Adamic or pre-Adamic nature? Granted that these are symbolic terms, the question is, Is Jesus fully man? Was the incarnation a complete self-

⁸⁶Nels F. S. Ferré, The Christian Understanding of God (London: 1952), p. 201.

⁸⁷Letter to the writer dated October 17, 1952.

emptying and identification with fallen man, man the sinner? If it was not, it cannot avail for our salvation. To answer these questions we have to say two things. In the first place Jesus Christ was fully man. In our humanity Jesus confronts the same temptations and enemies as man does. The temptation in the wilderness to satisfy His hunger is parallel to the temptation of Adam in the garden:

For as at the beginning it was by means of food that (the enemy) persuaded man, although not suffering hunger, to transgress God's commandments, so in the end he did not succeed in persuading Him that was anhungered to take that food which proceeded from God.⁸⁸

The temptation is the same, but the outcome is different. Again, we note how Irenaeus interprets the temptation by the adversary of man as untruth. The devil is the father of lies from the beginning: "As therefore the devil lies at the beginning, so did he also in the end, when he said, 'All these are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will give them.'" But the devil is lying when he says this, because "the heart of the king is in the hand of God."⁸⁹ In our humanity Jesus confronts the same temptations as we do. He also confronts the same enemies, sin and death. God "sent His creative Word, who in coming to deliver us came to the very place and spot in which we lost life."⁹⁰ The cost of His identification with man was a heavy one. The Son of God has come to take the "weighty burden" of man's sin, to be bowed down under it, and indeed to be crucified on account of it. Christ has known suffering and fear:

⁸⁸A.h. V.xxi.2.

⁸⁹A.h. V.xxiv.1.

⁹⁰Proof, 38.

For it behoved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, man; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so that sin should be destroyed by man, and man should go forth from death.⁹¹

That the humanity of Jesus Christ is our humanity Irenaeus is in no doubt. Nor is he in any doubt why Jesus Christ has taken this humanity. Had Christ not assumed this humanity, there would have been no redemption of man. It is remarkable, for example, that Irenaeus does not speak of the redemption of man as a "new creation" in the Pauline sense, for he is not concerned to say that God has created a new man on earth in Jesus Christ, a man who has no connexion with fallen Adam. In Christ God has entered humanity to redeem this humanity, that is, man as he is and as he needs to be redeemed. It is characteristic of Irenaeus, for example, that ^{he} frequently refers to unredeemed mankind as the "lost sheep." Christ has come to seek and find man - to "recapitulate the ancient creation," and not to make man afresh:

But if the Lord became incarnate for any other order of things, and took flesh of any other substance, He has not then summed up human nature in His own person, nor in that case can He be termed flesh But now the case stands thus, that the Word has saved that which really was created, viz. humanity which had perished He had Himself, therefore, flesh and blood, recapitulating in Himself not a certain other, but that original handiwork of the Father, seeking out that thing which had perished (non alteram quandam, sed illam principalem Patris plasmationem in se recapitulans, exquirens id quod perierat).⁹²

The question still remains, however, Did Jesus receive our Adamic

⁹¹A.h. III.xviii.7.

⁹²A.h. V.xiv.2; on fallen man as the "lost sheep" see A.h. III.xix.3, III.xxiii.1, III.xxiii.8, V.xii.3, V.xv.2, etc.

nature, or our pre-Adamic nature? What does it mean, that is, to speak about the sinlessness of Jesus? We have already affirmed that Irenaeus sees a continuity between Christ's humanity and ours. But there is also a discontinuity. Jesus Christ obeyed God, where Adam disobeyed. We shall later discuss the significance which Irenaeus attached to the obedience of Christ qua homo, particularly in regard to the temptations. Let it be sufficient to say in the meantime that in this, His obedience, Christ is not the same as man. Moreover, there is a discontinuity in regard to Christ's nature. Christ is not sinful, and if He had shared in our sin as a sinner (if, in Ferré's words, "he had shared the only problem we really have, namely, our sinful nature"), He would not have been more human, but less human, and the humanity which Jesus took in the incarnation is the pure humanity of God's creation. This, however, is not to say that Jesus must therefore have taken our pre-Adamic nature. He took neither our Adamic nature, nor our pre-Adamic, to use the symbolic terms. For there is a unique element in the incarnation. The humanity of Jesus Christ is not the same as the humanity of Adam before he fell, but is the mature and fully grown humanity to which Adam was destined to grow. Adam's humanity was that of the child: God had given him the capacity to grow to maturity. Christ's humanity is the developed and mature humanity of the man.

The second answer to the question, Is Jesus fully man?, which we have posed in relation to the sinlessness of Jesus Christ, will turn on the nature of sin. It is a real question if Ferré, for example, understands the

demonic and unnatural quality of sin when he states that Jesus has not really entered our humanity if He did not also share our sinfulness as sinner. For Irenaeus sin is an irrational, abnormal and baleful condition. In his sin man has taken a new lord who now holds him in bonds. To say that Jesus became all that man is, viz. to deny his sinlessness, is to say that He became bound in sin. He would thus have been as incapable of redeeming men as we are of redeeming ourselves. If redemption is then defined as "the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives to effect basic changes in us and in human history," we have in effect denied that Jesus Christ is in any real sense a Redeemer. At most He becomes an example of how we can be redeemed. If Jesus Christ is wholly one with us in this, in sin, then there is no reason at all to connect our redemption from sin with Christ's incarnation and atoning work.

Redemption accomplished in man's humanity. For Irenaeus, however, it is essential to understand that the redemption of man takes place in man. Redemption is accomplished on this level. It is man who is redeemed. But man in his bondage to the devil is incapable of redeeming himself: only God is strong enough, only God has the strength to bind the strong man, and God is in Christ. Christ alone is free of the entanglement of the devil, because only He, in our humanity, has spoken the truth in answer to the devil's lie. For Irenaeus, as we shall see in the following section, the resistance of Jesus to temptation as well as His struggle on the cross,

indeed, the birth, life, death of Jesus are all part of His recapitulation of Adam.

This is why Christ has gone through every age and experience of man: "He, when He came to save us, put Himself in our position, and in the same situation in which we lost life."⁹³ This is why His birth sanctifies our birth. He has lived through every age and experience of man. Irenaeus held that Jesus was crucified between the age of 40 and 50, maintaining that He had thus passed through every age; the first thirty years being the years of youth, forty being the minimum age for a Rabbi, and the years from forty to fifty being those when "a man begins to decline towards old age, which our Lord possessed while He still fulfilled the office of a Teacher."⁹⁴ Christ has passed through all these human ages in order that none may remain in the grasp of the devil. The work of Christ in redemption embraces the whole life and death of Jesus, and in His saving humanity redeems the whole life of all men:

For He came to save all through means of Himself - all, I say, who through Him are born again to God - infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men. He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children, thus sanctifying those who are of this age, being at the same time made to them an example of piety, righteousness, and submission; a youth for youths, becoming an example to youths, and thus sanctifying them for the Lord. So likewise He was an old man for old men, that He might be a perfect Master for all, not merely as respects the setting forth of the truth, but also as regards age, sanctifying at the same time the aged also, and becoming an example to them likewise. Then, at last, He came on to death itself, that He might be "the first-born from the dead."⁹⁵

⁹³Proof, 38. ⁹⁴A.h. II.xxii.5. ⁹⁵A.h. II.xxii.4.

The unity of incarnation and atonement. Here, as throughout Irenaeus, the atoning work of Christ is inseparable from His incarnate life: "Wherefore also He passed through every stage of life, restoring to all communion with God" (quarepter et per omnem venit aetatem, omnibus restituens eam quae est ad Deum communionem).⁹⁶ So thoroughly has Christ participated in man's humanity, that He suffers and endures even sin and death itself, so that Christ and not death might be lord over men. Christ has come to face and defeat the adversary of man from man's position. In this sense, therefore, Christ's entry into our flesh is the divine invasion of enemy-occupied territory, for man is under an alien lord. Christ came to the very spot in which we lost life.⁹⁷ He has entered the strong man's house, bound him, and spoiled his goods. The strong man is the devil, who has unlawfully and deceitfully taken man into his possession. But to bind the strong man, Christ has first to enter his house, i.e. He must come into our humanity in order to redeem us from within:

It was necessary that through man himself he (sc. the apostate angel) should, when conquered, be bound with the same chains with which he had bound man, in order that man, being set free, might return to his Lord, leaving to him those bonds by which he himself had been fettered, that is, sin.⁹⁸

In our humanity Jesus confronts the man-slayer; and therefore when Jesus as man achieves His victory over the devil by binding him and depriving him of

⁹⁶A.h. III.xviii.7. ⁹⁷Proof, 38.

⁹⁸A.h. V.xxi.3; cf. also III.viii.2, III.xxiii.3, IV.xxiv.1, IV.xl.3.

his power, man defeats his enemy. The defeat of Satan could have been achieved by some other means. But only in this way could Satan have been defeated and man redeemed. Jesus is recapitulator in His incarnation.

Many commentators approach Irenaeus from a different ^{angle} aspect and assert that the incarnation has replaced the crucifixion as having essential significance for man's salvation. Thus H. Lietzmann writes: "The theology of the cross and the doctrine of the expiatory sacrifice of Christ fell similarly into the background. The vital act of redemption was the incarnation of Christ and not His death."⁹⁹ Similarly, Lawson states: "On at least one occasion Irenaeus fails to speak of Divine Appeasement, and . . . this and allied conceptions have no part in the doctrine of recapitulation."¹⁰⁰ But we are to understand clearly what Irenaeus is saying about Christ in His incarnation. Christ has come to face the enemy of man, and it is this enemy that He faces, the enemy who is also God's enemy.

Moreover, even when Irenaeus is discussing Isaiah 53 he is not concerned with the question of penal substitution or the propitiation of God by Jesus Christ at this point. Lawson, for example, holds that Irenaeus failed to find in this Servant Song any penal substitution theory of the atonement.¹⁰¹ We can, however, understand his interpretation of Isaiah 53 only in the light of its polemical background. Irenaeus is speaking against

⁹⁹Lietzmann, The Founding of the Church Universal, p. 283.

¹⁰⁰Lawson, Biblical Theology, pp. 63, 193. ¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 63.

the docetic theology which made Christ's sufferings a pretence. He is not concerned with a theory of substitutionary atonement according to which Christ offers His obedience to God representatively for all men. At this point he is concerned to regard the question from a different aspect: Jesus has come in our humanity to stand for man against the enemy of man. He suffers and dies, but in the strength of God He defeats the devil, and so releases man from his bondage. Throughout the work of Christ it is the strength and power of God that we find. That is to say, if we may borrow the terminology of Aulén, Christ's humanity is the instrument of redemption, but the agent is God Himself. Indeed, so radically has Aulén criticised the interpretation of which Seeburg, Lawson, and Lietzmann are representatives and according to which the cross in Irenaeus has been displaced by the incarnation, that we must quote his words in full:

He does not think of the atonement as an offering made to God by Christ from man's side, or as it were from below; for God remains throughout the effective agent in the work of redemption. . . . The redemptive work is accomplished by the Logos through the Manhood as His instrument; for it could be accomplished by no power but that of God Himself. When Irenaeus speaks in this connexion of the "obedience" of Christ, he has not thought of a human offering made to God from man's side, but rather that the Divine will wholly dominated the human life of the Word of God, and found perfect expression in His work.¹⁰²

We have now examined what Irenaeus says concerning the humanity of Jesus Christ in considerable detail. Frequently we have had to touch on the atoning work, for in Irenaeus incarnation and atonement are inseparable. We shall therefore conclude our study by discussing Irenaeus's concept of

¹⁰²Aulén, Christus Victor, p. 50.

the recapitulating work of Jesus Christ.

The Recapitulation of Christ.

With the incarnation of Jesus Christ history has entered upon a new phase. The incarnate Word has arranged things in a new manner, and God has recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man - Deus, hominis antiquam plasmationem in se recapitulans, ut occideret quidem peccatum, evacuaret autem mortem, et vivificaret hominem.¹⁰³ The word recapitulatio is used by Irenaeus to define the whole work of Christ. In order to understand the significance which he attaches to it, we shall first outline briefly the use in classical literature and in the New Testament of the Greek form of the word, ἀνακεφαλαίωσις; and then summarize the interpretation given to the word by Irenaeus, concluding this section with a fuller exposition of the idea, with particular reference to the suffering and death of Christ.

The meaning of ἀνακεφαλαίωσις. The word ἀνακεφαλαίωσις is derived from κεφάλαιον which means chief point, summary, sum of the matter, or sum total,¹⁰⁴ head or topic,¹⁰⁵ recapitulation of argument,¹⁰⁶ or, very frequently, chapter. In the New Testament κεφάλαιον is used of a chief point¹⁰⁷ or money.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³A.h. III.xviii.7.

¹⁰⁴Plato, Laws, 643 D; Pindar, Pythian Odes, 4, 206.

¹⁰⁵Dionysius Halicarnassensis, Ars Rhetorica, 10.5.

¹⁰⁶Plato, Timaeus, 26. ¹⁰⁷Heb. 8.1.

¹⁰⁸Acts 22:28, in the sense of capital as opposed to interest (as frequently in Plato).

The verb κεφαλαιῶν means, therefore, to state summarily, to summarize a matter under separate heads,¹⁰⁹ that is, to bring separate parts together so as to form a whole. In the New Testament the word is used only once, in the sense of to wound in the head.¹¹⁰

The compound ἀνακεφαλαιώσθαι means to sum up, summarize, represent in a compendious form, or reproduce.¹¹¹ The idea of repetition which is implicit in the word is generally a logical or rhetorical one. Aristotle, for example, speaks of the ἔργον ῥητορικῆς as ἀνακεφαλαιώσθαι πρὸς ἀνάμνησιν.¹¹² Similarly, Quintilian defines the substantive as rerum repetitio et congregatio.¹¹³ A question of importance to us is whether the prefix ἀνα is used in the sense of re or of sursum. Chrysostom employs the verb in this sense, and makes it equivalent to συνάψαι : in this case the ἀνα means no more than it does in, say, the verb ἀναγινώσκειν. If the prefix suggests the gathering together of separated objects into a unity, one of the two instances of the word in the New Testament may illustrate this. In Romans the Apostle says, "If there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, ἐν τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."¹¹⁴ In this case Paul means that the

¹⁰⁹Thucydides, 3.67, 6.91. ¹¹⁰Mark 12:4; the reading is obscure.

¹¹¹Aristotle, Fragmenta, 133; cf. Protevangelium Jacobi, 13.

¹¹²Aristotle, Fragmenta, 123.

¹¹³Quintilian, Institutio oratoria, 6.1. ¹¹⁴Rom. 13:9.

various precepts of the law are brought to one and summed up in the new law of love for one's neighbour. On the other hand the prefix *ὅνα* is unquestionably capable of being interpreted in the sense of going over the same action again. Thus Tertullian, for example, can say, Affirmat omnia ad initium recolligi in Christo, and, Adeo in Christo omnia revocantur ad initium.¹¹⁵

Recapitulation in the New Testament. Almost certainly the Biblical source of Irenaeus's use of the term is Ephesians. Because of the importance of this passage, we shall quote it in full:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love: having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved: in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ (*ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ*) the things in the heavens, and the things upon earth.¹¹⁶

This passage may be interpreted to mean that in Jesus Christ God has drawn separated mankind into a new unity; and that in this new *ἀνακεφαλαιώσις* Jesus Christ repeats the actions of Adam but with the opposite effect. If so, this is the characteristic interpretation which we find in Irenaeus.

¹¹⁵Tertullian, Adv. Marcionem 5.17; de Monog., 5.

¹¹⁶Eph. 1:3-10.

Recapitulation in Irenaeus. The term ἀνακεφαλαιώσις which he uses does not occur in scripture, but it is a scriptural idea. Regularly the word is used to imply a connexion with what has gone before as well as a new beginning. Scholars who have tried to insist that Irenaeus must use the word in one particular sense or another have failed to understand him. To claim that Irenaeus used the term only in the sense of the perfection, completion, or drawing of creation into a unity that was intended for it by the Creator at the beginning is to go against the evidence of Irenaeus's own writings.¹¹⁷ That the term bears this meaning in his work it is absolutely clear. Recapitulation is the accomplishment of the plan of salvation, and is a process which began when God created the heavens and the earth through His hands, which continues during the whole period covered by the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ, and which points forward to and will be perfected in the eschatological consummation. On the other hand, however, it is a fundamental aspect of recapitulation that in Jesus Christ the actions of Adam are repeated, the same ground is gone over again, but with the opposite outcome. In Wingren's phrase recapitulation is

the plane of Creation breaking through in the incarnation and in the victory over evil through the temptations and passion of Jesus, by which our captivity is destroyed, and a way opened from death.¹¹⁸

That is to say, recapitulation is the recommencement of creation and a re-

¹¹⁷See Hugo Koch, Theologische Studien und Kritiken 1925, p. 198; Seeburg, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, Vol. I, (third edition, Leipzig and Erlangen: 1922), p. 407.

¹¹⁸Wingren, Man and the Incarnation, p. XIVf.

turn to the original state of man, as well as the completion and fulfilment of creation and the arriving at maturity of man.¹¹⁹

We shall now discuss recapitulation first in the event of the birth of Jesus Christ; then in the reversal of Adam's defeat; third in the restoration of the image and similitudo in man; and finally in the realisation in the Church.

The Creation of Adam and the Birth of Christ.

Historically the recapitulation of Jesus Christ begins with the incarnation. Before this time Christ has not been among men as recapitulator. Though we say this, we must also understand that for Irenaeus man's salvation and God's victory over the devil have been determined a priori in the hidden counsels of God: "The whole economy of salvation regarding man came to pass according to the good pleasure of the Father."¹²⁰ Even before the incarnation the issue is certain, because what God wills comes into being.

Adam's birth and Christ's. We have already seen in our discussion of the humanity of Jesus how Irenaeus uses the doctrine of the Virgin Birth to establish the connexion backwards with Adam: that is to say the Virgin Birth attests to the truth that the humanity of Jesus is the humanity of

¹¹⁹A.h. V.xxi.1; for a review of the discussion of the word see G. Melwitz, De ἈΝΑΚΕΦΑΛΑΙΩΣΕΩΣ in Irenaei Theologia Potestate (Dresden: 1874); S. F. D. Salmond, Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. III (London: 1903), p. 260f.; and the reference in Lawson, Biblical Theology, p. 142.

¹²⁰A.h. III.xxiii.1.

Adam. We shall try to see now the significance of the Virgin Birth as the recapitulation of Adam's birth. With Christ history is entering a new phase, but at the beginning of the new *οἰκονομία* is an event which parallels and in a sense reproduces the event of Adam's creation:

If, then, the first Adam had a man for his father, and was born of human seed, it were reasonable to say that the second Adam was begotten of Joseph. But if the former was taken from the dust, and God was his maker, it was incumbent that the latter also, making a recapitulation in Himself, should be formed as man by God to have an analogy with the former as respects His origin.¹²¹

The connexion between Adam and Jesus is that in Jesus we see man as God created him to become. When Jesus became incarnate it was the flesh of the one who was created to grow up to Him that He took, and in this sense the humanity of Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of Adam's humanity. It is this that Jesus Christ has become in His incarnation:

It was that there might not be another formation called into being, nor any other which should require to be saved, but that the very same formation should be recapitulated, the analogy having been preserved.¹²²

Jesus Christ has gathered into Himself the ancient formation of man (antiquam plasmationem in se recapitulatus est).¹²³ Irenaeus methodically and sometimes monotonously repeats the connexion between the first Adam and Christ, for the significance of the connexion is that in the act of Jesus's birth, death, and rising we see man's just victory over his enemy. The Serpent has beguiled and captured man; if God makes a new creation in Jesus Christ, then fallen man has not been redeemed and liberated. This is why the Lord professes Himself to be the Son of man, "comprising in Himself that original man out of whom the woman was fashioned" (ex quo ea quae

¹²¹A.h. III.xxi.10. ¹²²Ibid. ¹²³A.h. III.xxi.9.

secundum mulierem est plasmatic facta est).¹²⁴ "And then, again this Word was manifested when the Word of God was made man, assimilating Himself to man, and man to Himself, so that by means of his resemblance to the Son, man might become precious to the Father."¹²⁵

Eve and Mary. While there is a similarity and correspondence between the creation of Adam and the birth of Jesus, there is also a contrast: there is a recapitulation. Irenaeus contrasts, for example, Eve's disobedience and Mary's obedience, and pictures the latter as Mary's untangling of a skein of wool:

And even as she, having indeed a husband, Adam, but being nevertheless as yet a virgin. . . having become disobedient, was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race; so also did Mary, having a man betrothed (to her), and being nevertheless a virgin, by yielding obedience, became the cause of salvation, both to herself and the whole human race. . . . And thus also it was that the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the virgin Eve has bound fast through unbelief, this did the Virgin Mary set free through faith.¹²⁶

Through the obedience of Mary there came into the world the One who is the image and likeness of God:

And if the former did disobey God, yet the latter was persuaded to be obedient to God, in order that the Virgin Mary might become the patroness (*advocata*) of the virgin Eve. And thus, as the human race fell into bondage to death by means of a virgin, so it is rescued by a virgin; virginal disobedience having been balanced in the opposite scale by virginal obedience.¹²⁷

Do statements such as these contain the germ of the later Maria

¹²⁴A.h. V.xxi.1. ¹²⁵A.h. V.xvi.2; cf. Proof, 22.

¹²⁶A.h. III.xxii.4. ¹²⁷A.h. V.xix.1.

corredemptrix doctrine? Some scholars have clearly thought so.¹²⁸ But between Eve and the obedience of Mary there is both a connexion and a contrast. The birth of Jesus Christ recapitulates the creation of Adam by its connexion backwards (and in this sense a repetition is involved) as well as by its movement forward to the life of the resurrection (and in this case something new is brought into being).

It is not necessary to do more than state simply that for Irenaeus our salvation is attributable to God alone. For him the obedience of Mary has a soteriological significance different from that found in later theology. But essential to his understanding of man's salvation is that man shall freely and voluntarily submit to the act of God in Jesus Christ. Here again we see the significance of the assertion that Irenaeus repeatedly makes: God does not make a new creation, but restores the old.¹²⁹ The Holy Spirit, by whom God fashioned everything at the beginning, "has been poured forth in a new manner upon humanity over all the earth renewing man to God."¹³⁰ What has happened at the birth of Christ is a direct parallel to what happened at the creation of Adam - it is a secunda plasmatic.¹³¹ But when Irenaeus says that the human race is rescued by a virgin (genus humanum per Virginem salvatur),¹³² he has no sense of Mary as being in any way a co-

¹²⁸See Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique 7:2485:6.

¹²⁹There is a helpful discussion of this question in F. Sagnard, Irénée de Lyon Contre les Hérésies, Appendice B, pp. 426ff., especially p. 427: "Marie est donc au commencement du salut, un commencement causal (là encore), causa salutis, comme Eve est au commencement de la perte, causa mortis. Mais leur "causalité," à toutes les deux, s'exerce en dépendance des deux Adam Comme l'explique Irénée, Dieu seul pouvait accomplir cette oeuvre de salut . . . mais Dieu n'a voulu venir accomplir cette oeuvre qu'en soumettant au libre vouloir et acquiescement de sa creature."

¹³⁰Proof, 5f. ¹³¹A.h. V.xxiii.2. ¹³²A.h. V.xix.1.

redeemer, but the instrument, rather, by whom the First-begotten is incarnate in man's flesh in order to amend the sin of the first created man. Here, as throughout Irenaeus, the stress is on the redemptive significance of the humanity of Jesus.

The Death of Christ and the Reversal of Adam's Defeat.

The second aspect under which we may consider the recapitulating work of Christ is His victory over sin and death by which the defeat of Adam is reversed. The incarnation of Jesus Christ means that the Son of God has come into our flesh, to face the same temptations and the same enemies, sin and death, as Adam did and as we do. But the second Adam remained obedient unto death, "even the death of the cross," and thereby in our humanity rectified the disobedience which had occurred by reason of a tree.¹³³ The connexion between the disobedience of Adam and the death of Christ is direct. But since the Son has taken our flesh and in our place has rendered obedience to the commandment of God which we are incapable of rendering, we are therefore reconciled in Christ, when we become renewed in His image and likeness. The connexion between the death of Christ and our redemption is direct.¹³⁴

Christ's solidarity with man. Some commentators have criticized

¹³³A.h. V.xvi.3.

¹³⁴Ibid., but see especially the argument in the conclusion of the section.

Irenaeus for his failure to emphasise the idea of substitutionary atonement. In his work on the atonement Hastings Rashdall says: "The first of the fathers who holds the theory of an objective redemption approximating to the idea of substitution is Irenaeus, though even in him the theory is still always struggling with the older and more philosophical modes of expression."¹³⁵ Against this, however, we are to note that commentators who have criticized Irenaeus for his lack of emphasis on the substitutionary death of Christ have frequently formulated their doctrine of atonement on the basis of an individualistic interpretation of salvation.¹³⁶ In Irenaeus the stress is rather on the solidarity of Christ with the human race:

(God's) only-begotten Word, who is always present with the human race, united to and mingled with His own creation, according to the Father's pleasure, and who became flesh, is Himself Jesus Christ our Lord, who did also suffer for us, and rose again on our behalf, and who will come again in the glory of His Father, to raise up all flesh, and for the manifestation of salvation.¹³⁷

Every act, therefore, of the incarnate Christ is a representative act by the One who became flesh for us. When He is tempted, He is tempted for us, for mankind; when He suffers, He suffers for us; when He dies, He dies for us; and when He is raised from the dead, we are raised in Him. But in all this -- His temptations and His enduring the onslaught of the enemies of man, sin and death -- He is doing what Adam did, but with the opposite outcome. In other words, the victory of Jesus Christ recapitulates and

¹³⁵Rashdall, Idea of Atonement, pp. 233-49.

¹³⁶Ibid., Preface, p. viii. ¹³⁷A.h. III.xvi.6.

reverses the defeat of Adam.

In this case the victory of Jesus Christ is the natural fulfilment of His becoming man. When Adam fell through his disobedience he became liable to the attacks of the enemy of man, the serpent began to bruise the offspring of the woman⁴. But when Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin, He took up the conflict against the enemy of man which is described in Genesis 3:15, and though He is bruised, i.e. although He suffers, yet He in turn bruises the serpent, i.e. crushes and defeats the enemy of man. Thus the Lord recapitulated the enmity between the serpent and the woman when He was made man from a woman:¹³⁸

He has, therefore, in His work of recapitulation, summed up all things, both waging war against our enemy, and crushing him who had at the beginning led us away captives in Adam, and trampling upon his head, as thou canst perceive in Genesis that God said to the serpent, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall be on the watch for thy head, and thou on the watch for his heel." For from that time, He who should be born of a woman, namely from the Virgin, after the likeness of Adam, was preached as keeping watch for the head of the serpent.¹³⁹

The conflict between Adam and the serpent in which Adam has been defeated and degraded has now been taken up on our behalf by Christ our Champion; but where Adam has yielded and proved weak, Christ has resisted and proved strong:

Through the Second Man (God) bound the strong one, and spoiled his goods, and annihilated death, bringing life to man who had become subject to death. For Adam had become the devil's possession, and the devil held him under his power, by having wrongfully practised deceit upon him, and by the offer of immortality made him subject to death . . . Wherefore he who had taken man captive was himself taken captive by God, and man who had been taken captive was set free from the bondage

¹³⁸A.h. IV.xl.3. ¹³⁹A.h. V.xxi.1.

of condemnation.¹⁴⁰

The work of Jesus Christ as recapitulator begins with His birth, and it continues in His life, sufferings, and death. Every act of the Incarnate One is an act of recapitulation. He covers the same ground as Adam, and He encounters the same temptations and the same enemies, but in His case the issue is different: it is life in place of death, obedience in place of disobedience, and victory in place of defeat.

Christ's obedience as man. Christ resumes the conflict of the first Adam, but the issue is different. In these words we have a clue to the interpretation of the work of Christ in Irenaeus. This work is characteristically described by Irenaeus as obedience. The two places at which we see the obedience of Christ most markedly are His temptations and His passion. In the wilderness Jesus is confronted by the same kind of temptation as Adam in the garden: the same elements are involved in the temptation. There is a parallel between the two temptations. Both Adam and Christ are tempted to eat because they are hungry. In the case of Christ Irenaeus sees His temptations in the wilderness as proving his humanity: "Fasting forty days, like Moses and Elijah, He afterwards hungered, first, in order that we may perceive that He was a real and substantial man" (ut hominem eum verum et firmum intellegamus).¹⁴¹ But where Adam succumbed to the temptation to eat, Christ did not yield:

¹⁴⁰A.h. V.xxi.2,3. ¹⁴¹A.h. V.xxi.2.

For as at the beginning it was by means of food that the enemy persuaded man, although not suffering hunger, to transgress God's commandments, so in the end he did not succeed in persuading Him that was an-hungered to take the food that proceeded from God The corruption of man, therefore, which occurred in paradise by (both of our first parents) eating, was done away with by (the Lord's) want of food in this world.

Irenaeus is concerned to explain why there is this difference between Adam and Christ. Has Christ obeyed because He is the divine Son of God? Does He possess a supernatural power denied to Adam? No; on the contrary Christ's refusal to be tempted is due entirely to His submission of His will to the commandment of God. He has no divine power; He has merely our humanity. But this acknowledgment of His human nature and consequently His dependence upon the Father "baffles His adversary." The humility that depends on the word and promise of God (Christ thrice quotes the word of the Law to the Tempter, implying that as man He stands under the Law and is obedient to it) and this alone destroys the effect of Adam's infringement of the commandment and recapitulates his act of disobedience:

The pride of reason, therefore, which was in the serpent, was put to nought by the humility found in the man . . . and there was done away with that infringement of God's commandment which had occurred in Adam, by means of the precept of the law, which the Son of man observed, who did not transgress the commandment of God. (elatio itaque sensus quae fuit in serpente, dissoluta est per eam quae fuit in homine humilitas . . . et soluta est ea quae fuerat in Adam praecepti Dei praevaricatio, per praeceptum legis, quod servavit Filius hominis non transgrediens praeceptum Dei).¹⁴²

The victory of Jesus Christ over man's temptation is ascribed by Irenaeus to His obedience as a man. As man He thus reverses Adam's defeat

¹⁴²A.h. V.xxi.2; cf. J. Rivière, Le Dogme de la Redemption (Louvain: 1931), pp. 106ff.

and recapitulates it. In a similar way Jesus Christ is again confronted by the temptation of the devil on the cross. What happens to Jesus on the cross is parallel to what happened to Adam when he was tempted. Adam was tempted to reach out after a divinity which the Creator had not willed to give to him - "Ye shall not surely die . . . ye shall be as God." Jesus Christ is confronted on the cross with the awful words, "If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross."¹⁴³ But Christ resists the temptation to avoid death and to be something other than the man who hears God's voice and obeys it. As man He obeys; and He obeys the same God whom Adam, confronted by a similar temptation, disobeyed. Since, therefore, Jesus Christ has not grasped at His divinity, but has obeyed as a man, the calamity which was brought upon the race of men as a result of Adam's sin has been reversed. The human obedience of Jesus Christ recapitulates the disobedience of Adam. The obedience of Jesus, that is to say, has soteriological significance, as much as His birth, death, and resurrection. "As by means of a tree we were made debtors to God, (so also) by means of a tree we may obtain the remission of our debt."¹⁴⁴ Jesus Christ has recapitulated the disobedience which Adam incurred at the tree through the obedience which He showed at the cross.¹⁴⁵

Truth and obedience. A further aspect of Christ's obedience in His

¹⁴³Matt. 27:41. ¹⁴⁴A.h. V.xvii.3.

¹⁴⁵A.h. V.xix.1; cf. Proof, 34.

temptations and passion is that our Lord is contented to fight against the enemy of man only with truth. Truth and obedience are His only weapons. We have already discussed in regard to the fall of man how Irenaeus regarded the defeat of Adam as his yielding to the lie of the devil. At the moment when he tempted man the devil lied: "In the beginning he enticed man to transgress his Maker's law, and thereby got him into his power; yet his power consists in transgression and apostasy."¹⁴⁶ However disobedient man may be and responsible for his guilt, Satan has no right to man, for he has stolen the good creation of God. But since man has yielded to the enticement of the devil, he now opposes the Creator of all things, that is, he now opposes reality, and the life he has is the life of a lie:

The devil, however, as he is the apostate angel, can only go to this length, as he did at the beginning, namely, to deceive and lead astray the mind of man into disobeying the commandments of God, and gradually to darken the hearts of those who would endeavour to serve him, to the forgetting of the true God, but to the adoration of himself as God.¹⁴⁷

In His conflict with the devil, however, Christ fights only with truth. Were He to employ wrong in His conflict He would at once be defeated, just as Adam was defeated by yielding to a lie. Christ's power is dependent not only upon His goodness, but upon the fact that He alone among men has unbroken communion with the source of all reality.

At this point we disagree with Aulén's interpretation of the meaning of Christ's victory over the devil.¹⁴⁸ Aulén quotes an important passage in

¹⁴⁶A.h. V.xxi.3. ¹⁴⁷A.h. V.xxiv.3.

¹⁴⁸Aulén, Christus Victor, p. 43f.; Cf. Rivière, Dogme de la redemption, pp. 99f.

Irenaeus:

And though the apostasy had gained its dominion over us unjustly, and, when we belonged by nature to almighty God, had snatched us away contrary to nature and made us its own disciples, the Word of God, who is mighty in all things and in no wise lacking in the justice which is His, behaved with justice even towards the apostasy itself; and He redeemed that which was His own, not by violence . . . but by persuasion (secundum suadellam), as it was fitting for God to gain His purpose by persuasion and not by use of violence; that so the ancient creation of God might be saved from perishing, without any infringement of justice.¹⁴⁹

Aulén is perfectly correct when he says that this passage should not be interpreted in juridical terms, but means rather that the devil has no rights over men, and that therefore when God redeems man and restores him from his bondage to the man-slayer, God is acting juste, and is not infringing any "rights" of the devil. Unlike some of the later Fathers, Irenaeus is not prepared to say that the devil has any rights whatsoever over man.

When, however, Aulén says that the real meaning of the phrase, "The Word of God behaved with justice towards the apostasy," i.e. "God observes the rules of fair play," we must enter a disclaimer. Aulén interprets juste to mean that "even with the devil God deals in an orderly way." The statement that God fights His conflict with the devil juste means more than Aulén allows. To oppose God the Creator is to oppose reality: it is to be in a lie. But to obey the Creator is to live: it is to be in the truth. And truth and obedience are the only weapons with which Jesus fights against the enemy of man. When, therefore, in the wilderness and on the cross He submits to the Creator's will and obeys the divine command, the devil's lie ceases to enthrall man. It loses its power, and life is brought again to

men because Jesus has united in His own person obedience, truth, and creative power. The devil has power over man, but he has no rights, and when Irenaeus says that God behaves with justice towards the devil and saves man from perishing without any infringement of justice, we are not to understand this in any juridical sense, as though God recognised some legitimate claim on the part of the devil (and therefore owed him a "ransom"). The words are to be understood rather in terms of the conflict which Jesus undertook against the enemy of man who is a thief and a murderer from the beginning.

Ransom. There is no debt owed to the devil: "For we were debtors to none other but to Him whose commandment we had transgressed."¹⁵⁰ Thus any idea of a ransom due to the devil is quite alien to Irenaeus. This is one point which he stresses. At the time when he led man into his power the devil lied - "Ye shall not surely die . . . ye shall be as God." At the time when he tempted the Son of man in the wilderness the devil lied - "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." The devil has no rights. He is guilty of having taken man into his possession wrongfully.

The other aspect of the matter which Irenaeus stresses is man's guilt. The devil has not stolen something good from God, but something evil. Man was created to rejoice in his fellowship with the Creator; but in his self-will he followed the Tempter. He has therefore no claim on the mercy of God. When Irenaeus speaks of the redemption of man by Jesus Christ

¹⁵⁰A.h. v.xvi.3.

we are not to interpret his statements in juridical terms, but in terms of the conflict which Christ has undertaken against the devil. The "just" defeat of the devil does not mean that the devil has had his rights conceded to, but that Christ has used only truth and obedience in His conflict:

And justly indeed is he led captive, who had led men unjustly into bondage; while man, who had been led captive in times past, was rescued from the grasp of his possessor, according to the tender mercy of God the Father, who had compassion on His own handiwork, and gave to it salvation, restoring it by means of the Word - that is, by Christ - in order that man might learn by actual proof that he receives incorruptibility not of himself, but by the free gift of God.¹⁵¹

If we grant that Irenaeus frequently uses the concept of "ransom," he does so in the Biblical sense of the term: "The Lord has thus redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh."¹⁵² But the Lord has redeemed us and given His blood as a ransom, not as a payment to the devil, but as a man would who enters a battle in order to deliver a friend.¹⁵³

The strong man who is Christ. When Irenaeus speaks, as he frequently does, of Christ and Satan, he does not speak of the death of Christ as the price of ransoming man except in the sense which we have just mentioned, but rather (and characteristically) as the fearful punishment inflicted on

¹⁵¹A.h. V.xxi.3. ¹⁵²A.h. V.i.1.

¹⁵³See Wingren, Man and the Incarnation, p. 129; Rashdall, Idea of Atonement, p. 245, speaks of Irenaeus as maintaining that the Father allowed Christ to die so that the claims of the devil might be satisfied, or at least, p. 247, as beginning a train of thought that led to this doctrine. But Irenaeus does not allow that the devil has any claims. See Lawson, Biblical Theology, p. 197f.

Christ by the devil in their conflict for man. We see this clearly in Irenaeus's exposition of Matthew 12:29.¹⁵⁴ He quotes the passage, "How can one enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." He then examines the meaning of "goods" and "strong man." By "goods," Irenaeus maintains, is meant man who has been taken wrongfully and unnaturally into the power of the devil, the "strong man." The devil's evil work has been to put man and God in enmity:

The Lord, indeed, sowed good seed in His own field; and He says, "The field is the world." But while men slept, the enemy came, and "sowed tares in the midst of the wheat, and went his way." Hence we learn that this was the apostate angel and the enemy, because he was envious of God's workmanship, and took in hand to render this (workmanship) at enmity with God.¹⁵⁵

Man is the rightful possession of the Creator, but the apostate angel has ruled like a tyrant over man. Man's captivity to the devil is an unnatural one:

And since the apostasy tyrannised over us unjustly, and, though we were by nature the property of the omnipotent God, alienated us contrary to nature, rendering us its own disciples, the Word of God . . . did righteously turn against that apostasy, and redeem from it His own property.¹⁵⁶

The devil has stolen man from God: "In the beginning he enticed man to transgress his Maker's law, and thereby got him into his power; yet his power consists in transgression and apostasy."¹⁵⁷ He has envied man's position as a child of God, for man was created to grow to maturity, "to the

¹⁵⁴A.h. III.viii.2. ¹⁵⁵A.h. IV.xl.3.

¹⁵⁶A.h. V.i.1. ¹⁵⁷A.h. V.xxi.3.

fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ." And in his envy the devil has stolen man from his Maker. But Jesus Christ has come to earth to enter into conflict with the man-slayer:

For He was man contending for the fathers, and through obedience doing away with disobedience completely: for He bound the strong man, and set free the weak, and endowed His own handiwork with salvation, by destroying sin. For He is a holy and most merciful Lord, and loves the human race.¹⁵⁸

Our Lord is stronger than the tyrant, and has bound him and snatched the prisoners from his house. He is Christus Victor.

Conflict and victory. Here we begin to see how closely Irenaeus connects the incarnation and the atonement. Jesus Christ has come to earth not merely to show human life in its purity and integrity, but to enter into the conflict with the strong man. The victory of Jesus over the devil in His death and resurrection represents the climax of the struggle between the Creator of life and the man-slayer. Behind all life, as we have earlier seen, Irenaeus sees the gift of the Creator who continues to pour life out upon man; and behind all death is to be seen the power of the devil. At the cross of Jesus Christ we therefore see the power of God in conflict with the power of the devil. Jesus has been killed by a sinful coalition of politicians and religious leaders, but behind His death is the power of the serpent to bruise the heel of Eve's descendent. At all times in history the devil has been trying to bruise man and keep him in thrall. But the crucifixion represents the accumulated and massive effort of the Satanic

¹⁵⁸A.h. III.xviii.6,7.

power to bruise man, i.e. the Son of God in our flesh, pure and unsoiled man. When, therefore, Christ defeats the devil by His death, He defeats sin and death for all men at all times.

The attainment of this victory, however, is a bloody and costly one: it is the passion and death of Jesus Christ. His victory was not an easy accomplishment, secure because of His divinity, but came through the hardest conflict and suffering.¹⁵⁹ Christ has redeemed us by His own blood.¹⁶⁰ Unlike many commentators who do not find that the cross of Christ has been given due significance in Irenaeus, we find that Irenaeus on the contrary interprets the death of Christ as the climax of His work of redemption. R. Seeburg, for example, states: "The cross of Christ has not (in Irenaeus) the significance which, after Paul, was usual."¹⁶¹ N. Bonwetsch similarly asserts that Irenaeus gives only a secondary place to the crucifixion: he does not give it an essential part in the atonement.¹⁶² Emil Brunner has given an adequate rebuttal of Harnack's criticism that Irenaeus's doctrine of salvation is little more than a piece of Hellenistic rationalism. He finds it, in fact, incredible that in face of the evidence of Irenaeus's own writings, any one could make this charge:

It is quite wrong to say that Irenaeus regarded the incarnation by itself, severed from the life of the Saviour, severed from the death and resurrection of Christ, as the divine act of salvation.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹A.h. III.xvi.6. ¹⁶⁰A.h. V.i.1.

¹⁶¹Seeburg, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, Vol. I, p. 330.

¹⁶²Bonwetsch, Die Theologie des Irenaus, p. 113.

¹⁶³Emil Brunner, Der Mittler (Tübingen: 1930), English translation The Mediator by Olive Wyon (London: 1939), p. 259.

What Irenaeus does do, as none of the Fathers before him had done so conclusively, is to stress the unity of Christ's incarnation, death on the cross, and resurrection: "His Christology is always soteriological, and his soteriology is always Christological."¹⁶⁴

The vanquishing of sin and death. The connexion between the death of Jesus on the cross and His temptation in the wilderness is illustrated by the unity between disobedience and death. When God commanded man to obey His word in the beginning, He showed that disobedience would be followed by death; and "that God was true, and the serpent a liar, was proved by the result, death having passed upon those who had eaten."¹⁶⁵ In the wilderness, therefore, and on the cross Jesus encounters two aspects of a single attack, and thus, conversely, the victory of Jesus over the Tempter in the wilderness cannot be separated from His defeat of death on the cross. Moreover, Irenaeus also sees with great clarity the connexion between the death of Christ and the death of Adam. In one sense Jesus Christ died not on the cross alone but when Adam sinned against God:

If anybody seeks diligently to learn upon what day of the seven it was that Adam died, he will find it by examining the dispensation of the Lord. For by summing up in Himself the whole human race from the beginning to the end, He also summed up its death. From this it is clear that the Lord suffered death, in obedience to His Father, upon that day on which Adam died while he disobeyed God. Now he died on the same day on which he did eat. For God said, "In the day on which ye shall eat of it, ye shall die by death." The Lord, therefore, recapitulating in Himself this day, underwent His sufferings upon the

¹⁶⁴Op. cit., p. 250. ¹⁶⁵A.h. V.xxiii.1.

day preceding the Sabbath, that is, the sixth day of the creation, on which day man was created; thus granting him a second creation by means of His passion, which is that (creation) out of death.¹⁶⁶

In this passage Irenaeus sees the ontological connexion between the death of man and the death on the cross. Adam's sin and his mortality have been recapitulated in the death at Calvary; but conversely the resurrection of Christ recapitulates the death of Adam. It is "a second creation by means of His passion." In this statement Irenaeus sees to the very heart of the meaning of the atonement.

We are now in a position to consider how the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ reverse the sin and death of Adam.

Man lives in the dominion of sin, and death is a mark or sign of that dominion. Sin is "ein Bestandtheil des Todes,"¹⁶⁷ a component part of death, for

on as many as, according to their own choice, depart from God, He inflicts that separation from Himself which they have chosen of their own accord. But separation from God is death, and separation from light is darkness; and separation from God consists in the loss of all the benefits which He has in store.¹⁶⁸

In two passages Irenaeus expounds scripture in a way which clearly proves that for him the connexion between sin and death is obvious. In his exposition of the healing of the paralytic in Matthew 9 Irenaeus points to the sequence of word and act in this miracle. Jesus first forgives the man's sins and then commands him to take up his bed and go into his house:

¹⁶⁶A.h. V.xxiii.2.

¹⁶⁷Bonwetsch, Die Theologie des Irenaus, p. 80f.

¹⁶⁸A. h. V.xxvii.2.

By this work of His He confounded the unbelievers, and showed that He is Himself the voice of God, by which man received commandments, which he broke, and became a sinner; for the paralysis followed as a consequence of sins.¹⁶⁹

The physical (paralysis) and the ethical (sin) are connected. Similarly in his exposition of the raising of Lazarus in John 9 Irenaeus states that the bandages which were wrapped around the body were "symbolical of that man who had been bound in sins. And therefore the Lord said, 'Loose him, and let him depart.'¹⁷⁰

The redemption of Jesus Christ is thus interpreted by Irenaeus as the vanquishing of sin and the destruction of death. Characteristically he sees that the obedience of Christ in the wilderness and on the cross together are part of His conflict with the devil. The obedience of Christ in our humanity and the death of Christ in our humanity are the means by which salvation comes to men. In our humanity Christ obeyed the word of God in the wilderness, and refused to yield to the temptation of the devil. Thereby the power of sin over man was broken, for this man was obedient to the law and the commandments. This obedience is as necessary a part of His recapitulation of man as His incarnation or His crucifixion. The whole life of Jesus is recapitulation. It is, however, in God's strength that Jesus accomplishes this. The strength which is seen in His resistance to the Tempter in the wilderness, and the strength which is seen in His resurrection from the dead, is God's strength. The life which flows to man as a

¹⁶⁹A.h. V. xvii.2. ¹⁷⁰A.h. V.xiii.1.

consequence of Christ's recapitulation is the divine life of the Word of God who became incarnate in order to undo death and work life in man.¹⁷¹

The death on the cross is the climax of Christ's mission and conflict. Christ came to earth to battle against the usurper. He came to abolish death.¹⁷² But "because death ruled in the body, it was necessarily through the body that it should be done away with."¹⁷³ The mortality and corruptibility of man meant that Jesus should die for man's sake. When man sinned he became subject to death; this was the judgment upon him. But in His crucifixion Jesus Christ dies: He gives His life deliberately for man's sake, taking the judgment upon Himself:

So too the judgment has been taken on some, and they have it in the torments of their perdition; but off others, and they are thereby saved. But those men took judgment on themselves, who crucified Him, and, having thus treated Him, did not believe Him, so that they be brought to perdition with torments through the judgment which was taken by them. And judgment has been taken off those who believe in Him, and they are no more subject to it.¹⁷⁴

By His passion, therefore, Jesus has recalled man to incorruption. The death of our Lord has become the means of healing and remission of sins, and therefore of access to life.¹⁷⁵

At present the significance of this victory is visible only to faith. Christ's dominion in the meantime is a hidden one: "We still dwell upon the

¹⁷¹Proof, 37; A.h. III.xviii.7.

¹⁷²Proof, 6,33,37-9; A.h. IV.xxxviii.4. ¹⁷³Proof, 31.

¹⁷⁴Proof, 69f. ¹⁷⁵A.h. II.xx.3; III.v.3; IV.xxvii.2.

earth, and have not yet sat down upon His throne."¹⁷⁶ And yet His victory is sure. When He was nailed to the cross the government was upon His shoulders.¹⁷⁷ Men chose Barabbas and denied their eternal King. They failed to see in the Crucified "their life hanging before their eyes."¹⁷⁸ But those who have received Him have received life.

The Resurrection of Christ and the Restoration of the Imago Dei.

By the disobedience of the first man, man's destiny was fixed. But a new phase of history had begun, and at the cross a new destiny is available for man" "As by means of a tree we were made debtors to God, (so also) by means of a tree we may obtain the remission of our debt."¹⁷⁹ In the disobedience of the first man men have lost their true nature. Though created in the image and similitude of God, yet by their disobedience they have lost the capacity for growth and fallen victim to the enemy of man, the devil. But Jesus Christ has entered into conflict with the man-slayer: in the wilderness and upon the cross He has been locked in combat with him. And in the resurrection Christ breaks the power of death through the strength of God. Death is destroyed. Death can no longer hold this man in its grasp. For Irenaeus the meaning of Easter Sunday is that on this day "the one man in creation who is incorrupted stands forth as the image of God on the third day."¹⁸⁰ Death has ceased to have power over this man. Consequently it has

¹⁷⁶A.h. II.xxviii.7. ¹⁷⁷Proof, 56. ¹⁷⁸A.h. V.xviii.3.

¹⁷⁹A.h. V.xvii.3. ¹⁸⁰Wingren, Man and the Incarnation, p. 132.

ceased to have power over any man. Through the redemption accomplished by His blood Jesus Christ delivers us, "restoring to His own handiwork what was said of it in the beginning, that man was made after the image and likeness of God" (restaurans suo plasmati quod dictum est in principio, factum esse hominem secundum imaginem et similitudinem Dei).¹⁸¹ For Irenaeus the sacramental significance of this union of the believer with Christ is plain:

Then, again, how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood, goes to corruption, and does not partake of life? . . . For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of resurrection to eternity.¹⁸²

The renewed life of man. Man in union with Christ is "no longer corruptible." That is to say, the purpose of God for Adam at the beginning has been accomplished. Thus the life of the man who is restored by Christ is not a donum superadditum, but is the renewed life of the primal creation. Irenaeus expounds Isaiah in this way. The prophet had said, "the Lord bindeth up the hurt of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."¹⁸³ The "stroke of their wounds," says Irenaeus, "means that inflicted at the beginning upon disobedient man in Adam, that is, death; which stroke the Lord will heal when He raises us from the dead, and restores the inheritance of the fathers."¹⁸⁴ Man recovers his true nature when he is redeemed through the death of Christ. Christ has not come to make man divine but to make him human. It is remarkable how some commen-

¹⁸¹A.h. V.ii.1. ¹⁸²A.h. IV.xviii.5. ¹⁸³Isa. 30:25f.

¹⁸⁴A.h. V.xxxiv.2.

tators have been able to misinterpret Irenaeus at this point. Rashdall, for example, quotes the Preface to Adversus haereses, Book V: "The Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself" (propter suam immensam dilectionem factus est quod sumus nos, uti nos perficeret esse quod et ipse). Rashdall comments: "Here we have . . . the characteristic thought of almost all subsequent Greek theology: God became man in order that man might become divine."¹⁸⁵ But Irenaeus does not say this. Man at the beginning has lost "life." He has lost the capacity to grow to the maturity ordained for him by God, and he has plunged into death - latenter semetipsum occidit hominem. Christ, however, has healed the wound which has destroyed man, and given him life again:

As, then, he who was made a living soul forfeited life when he turned aside to do what was evil, so, on the other hand, the same individual, when he reverts to what is good, and receives the quickening Spirit, shall find life.¹⁸⁶

And yet the life which Christ gives to the man who receives the Spirit is not the same as the unsullied life of the primal creation: the factor of growth has entered in. The life which Christ gives is greater than the primal creation because it is the life which is full grown, mature, and strong. It is the life to which God destined man to grow when He created him.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵Rashdall, Idea of Atonement, p. 240.

¹⁸⁶A.h. V.xii.2. ¹⁸⁷Wingren, Man and the Incarnation, p. 48.

The recapitulating work of the two Hands of God. It is interesting to note in this regard how Irenaeus considers the Spirit and the Son as recapitulating the work of creation in the new work of restoring man to life. Thus in the context of the healing of the man who was blind from birth he asserts that in performing the miracle the Lord manifested "the hand of God to those who can understand by what hand man was formed out of the dust." The healing of men from sin is likewise the recapitulating work of the two Hands of God who made man at the beginning:

This hand of God which formed us at the beginning, and which does form us in the womb, has in the last times sought us out who were lost, winning back His own, and taking up the lost sheep upon His shoulders, and with joy restoring it to the fold of life.¹⁸⁸

This idea is developed in an interesting way in another part where Irenaeus discusses the descent of the Spirit on the Son of God in the incarnation. At the beginning when man had disobeyed God he forfeited life and lost his possession of the Spirit, "the Giver of life." There is, however, the prophecy that in the Messianic age God would again pour out His Spirit upon all flesh; therefore, Irenaeus states, the Spirit

did also descend upon the Son of God, made the Son of man, becoming accustomed in fellowship with Him to dwell in the human race, to rest with human beings, and to dwell in the workmanship of God, working the will of the Father in them, and renewing them from their old habits into the newness of Christ.¹⁸⁹

The idea of the Two Hands of God recapitulating the work of the Creator in redeeming man is common in Irenaeus: "In the last times, not by the will of the flesh, not by the will of man, but by the good pleasure of the Father,

¹⁸⁸A.h. V.xv.2. ¹⁸⁹A.h. III.xvii.1.

His hands formed a living man, in order that Adam might be created (again) after the image and likeness of God."¹⁹⁰ Jesus Christ has restored man into friendship with God through His incarnation, but this restoration to communion with God is available only if man dies to sin and lives again in the life of God. The Christian has a death to be undergone and a resurrection to experience.

The death of the body and death to sin. Irenaeus thinks of this death both physically and ethically. The Christian has to be crucified with Christ, and this mortification is not simply an ethical one. This explains why Irenaeus frequently affirms that the physical death of a man is the place at which the imago Dei is fully restored:

For it was necessary, at first, that nature should be exhibited; then, after that, that what was mortal should be conquered and swallowed up by immortality, and the corruptible by incorruptibility, and that man should be made after the image and likeness of God, having received the knowledge of good and evil.¹⁹¹

It should also be recalled that Irenaeus wrote at the time of martyrdom, and for him martyrdom is the time at which the Church is brought fully into communion with the Crucified:

And for this cause tribulation is necessary for those who are saved, that having been after a manner broken up, and rendered fine, and sprinkled over by the patience of the Word of God, and set on fire (for purification), they may be fitted for the royal banquet.¹⁹²

The death of the Christian believer is also ethical. Since sin has

¹⁹⁰A.h. V.1.3. ¹⁹¹A.h. IV.xxviii.4; cf. III.xvi.6.

¹⁹²A.h. V.xxviii.4.

meant death for man, dying to sin, i.e. forgiveness, is the way to life for man. Forgiveness is the way by which we are restored to communion with the Father, for the One who gave man life in the beginning by His creative Word gives man life in Jesus Christ by saying, "Thy sins are forgiven thee":

And therefore in the last times the Lord has restored us into friendship through His incarnation, having become "the Mediator between God and men"; . . . conferring also upon us the gift of communion with, and subjection to, our Maker. For this reason also He taught us to say in prayer, "And forgive us our debts"; since indeed He is our Father, whose debtors we were Rightly then does His Word say to man, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"; He, the same against whom we had sinned in the beginning, grants forgiveness of sins in the end.¹⁹³

The Church as the sphere of growth. The sphere in which the restoration of man takes place is the Church. We have already seen how for Irenaeus one of the consequences of the Fall of man was the cursing of the ground for man's sake. The present condition of travail by which man has to eat his bread by the sweat of his face and woman has to produce children in the pain of childbirth is a consequence for Irenaeus of man's sin at the beginning. But the whole creation groans and labours until the time of the Consummation. In the meantime, however, it is in the Church that the meek are beginning to inherit the earth; that is to say, it is in the life of the Christian that the conflict between God and the enemy of man, the devil, is continuing. The outcome of this conflict is already certain, because Christ has died and risen again, and the life of man is being renewed daily in the Church, and the power of the devil being weakened until it will finally be

¹⁹³A.h. V.xvii.1.

destroyed totally. The new fellowship which exists in the Body of Christ is an expression of the recapitulation: man has been restored to God and to his fellow-man. In the Church man grows up to the imago Dei. In the kingdom of the Son the man who has been defeated by sin and death has in Christ already met and conquered sin and death, for Christ has already achieved for him this victory. In the Church, therefore, man is on his way to his eternal destiny.

It is in this context that Irenaeus speaks of "rebirth," whereas, as we saw earlier, he customarily avoids the concepts of rebirth and new creation which we find in Paul. Baptism for Irenaeus is both the "laver of regeneration" and the seal of our adoption with full inheritance. Thus, Irenaeus states, when Jesus smeared the eyes of the man born blind, He told him to go to Siloam and wash,

thus restoring to him both (his perfect) conformation, and that regeneration which takes place by means of the laver. And for this reason when he was washed he came seeing, that he might both know him who had fashioned him, and that man might learn (to know) Him who has conferred upon him life.¹⁹⁴

Baptism is "the seal of eternal life and is rebirth unto God, that we be no more children of mortal men, but of the eternal and everlasting God."¹⁹⁵ The category of rebirth into the Church, of which baptism is the seal, implies also that it is in the Church that man "grows" again towards the destiny appointed for him by God. As the child grows by receiving life from his mother, so the Christian grows by receiving life from the Giver of life

¹⁹⁴A.h. V.xv.3. ¹⁹⁵Proof, 3.

in the Church:

Those, therefore, who do not partake of Him, are neither nourished into life from the mother's breasts, nor do they enjoy that most limpid fountain which issues from the body of Christ.¹⁹⁶

In the Church God provides man with the sustenance which is the "bread of immortality," viz. the Spirit of the Father, and on this he grows to maturity.¹⁹⁷ Since the Spirit was poured out upon the apostles at Pentecost there has come the possibility of new life for man, i.e. the possibility of becoming man. When our Lord gave the disciples the commission to go into the world and baptize all nations, He gave them, according to Irenaeus, "the power of regeneration unto God" (ἡ δύναμις τῆς ἀναγεννήσεως εἰς θεόν).¹⁹⁸

Irenaeus interprets the story of the Good Samaritan in this sense:

We have need . . . that where we have an accuser there we may have also an Advocate, the Lord commending to the Holy Spirit His own man (suum hominem, sc. the human race), who had fallen among thieves, whom He Himself compassionated, and bound up his wounds, giving two royal denaria; so that we, receiving by the Spirit the image and superscription of the Father and the Son, might cause the denarium entrusted to us to be fruitful, counting out the increase (thereof) to the Lord.¹⁹⁹

The Spirit and the Son again give life to man.

Immortality. In this manner man becomes "immortal" and "incorruptible." Again the pattern of the primal creation recurs, but in an altered way. God gives life, man receives it; and when man receives life in the Church from the two Hands of God, he is no longer touched by the mortality and corruptibility which are his end apart from Christ:

¹⁹⁶A.h. III.xxiv.1. ¹⁹⁷A.h. IV.xxxviii.1. ¹⁹⁸A.h. III.xvii.1.

¹⁹⁹A.h. III.xvii.3.

For by no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality, unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality (nisi adunati fuissetis incorruptelae et immortalitati).²⁰⁰

Some commentators have reacted uneasily against this "strange" doctrine of Irenaeus, the incorruptibility of man. Lawson, for example, sees this as "an Hellenistic modification of the notion of salvation."²⁰¹ But Irenaeus is in no doubt of the significance of saying that man receives incorruptibility (ἀφθαρσία), from the Spirit. God is God and man is man. The life that God gives to man in the Church, and which He will give in the eschatological Kingdom, is none other than the life of God. In this Kingdom man will "forget to die." But the immortality that man will receive, and indeed is already beginning to receive in the Church, is the gift of God; it is not a possession in man himself. Thus Irenaeus expounds Psalm 21:5 as follows:

Now what is this that he says, He asked life, since he was about to die? He proclaims his resurrection from the dead, and that being raised from the dead he is immortal. For he received both life, that he should rise, and length of days for ever and ever, that he should be incorruptible.²⁰²

In the consummation man will be perfectly what God has created him to be - not God, but man, made in the image and likeness of God. But at present in the Church this growth is just beginning. Man is "on the way." In the Church, however, man has a new head, Jesus Christ. And the Church is the first of the new humanity, recapitulated by their Head,²⁰³ who will increase

²⁰⁰A.h. III.xix.1. ²⁰¹Lawson, Biblical Theology, p. 165.

²⁰²Proof, 72.

²⁰³At times Irenaeus appears to derive ἀνακεφαλαιώσεις from κεφαλή. The etymology is false. Irenaeus, however, is clearly trying to relate his doctrine of recapitulation with Christ as the Head of the Church.

until at length all men stand before the judgment seat of God. Jesus Christ has become man, has been tempted, "yet without sin," and has risen from the dead. His body, the Church, will follow Him into victory.

The work of Jesus Christ has been "to complete and gather up all things in order to abolish death and show forth life, and produce a community of union between God and man."²⁰⁴ The enemy of man has been destroyed; but those whom he has trapped by deceit and held in bonds have been liberated by Christ, and in the meantime the Gospel is preached so that men may be brought deliverance. The Wonderful Counsellor has called man back again into communion with God, so that by communion with Him we may have incorruptibility.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴Proof, 97.

²⁰⁵Proof, 40.

CHAPTER V

REDEMPTION AS TRUE KNOWLEDGE AND DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH

IN JUSTIN MARTYR

I. THE BIBLICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE

IN THE SECOND CENTURY

The interpretation of salvation in the second century may be said to have two foci. On the one hand the Gospel is understood as the true knowledge. The writer of the Epistle of Barnabas thus writes, he tells his readers, "so that your knowledge may be perfected along with your faith."¹ This knowledge he describes as τελεία γνώσις because men are darkened in their minds in ignorance and sin, but Christ enlightens their minds and frees them from this darkness.² For Clement Christ is the One "through whom God has revealed to us the truth and the heavenly life."³ On the other hand salvation is also understood as deliverance from death. Thus for Polycarp the good news of the Gospel is that "He endured all His sufferings on account of us, that we might live in Him."⁴ Ignatius says, "God was displayed in human form to bring 'newness of eternal life.' Then what had been completed in the purpose of God began to be enacted: hence the whole uni-

¹Ep. of Barn. 1:5. ²Ep. of Barn. 14:5. ³II Clem. 20:5.

⁴Poly. Phil. 8:1.

verse was stirred, because the destruction of death was being undertaken."⁵ This aspect of the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ is so common in the theology of this period that we need do no more than mention it.

The writings of this period are filled with references to Jesus Christ in this double aspect of His redemption. He is Teacher and Suffering Servant; He is the Bringer of light and the Strong Man who delivers His own from the tyranny of death. Both emphases can be found in varying degrees in a single writer. Both quite clearly have a firm basis in the New Testament.

The idea of Knowledge in Scripture and Hellenistic Thought.

Let us briefly examine the relation between knowledge and faith in scripture. For the Apostle Paul knowledge and faith are integrally related. "If we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more." "We also believe, and therefore also we speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus."⁶ The Apostle, however, is not suggesting that faith depends for its validity on some independent knowledge, but rather, to use Bultmann's phrase, knowledge is appropriated "only in obedient, comprehending faith." In this connexion a comment by Karl Barth is illuminating: "The knowledge of God is bound to the object

⁵Eph. 19. ⁶Rom. 6:8f., II Cor. 4:13f.

set before it by God's Word Faith is the total positive relationship of man to the God who gives Himself to be known in His Word."⁷ The priority of faith is attested in a further passage from Paul: "Let us also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh patience."⁸ This knowledge which the believer has is precisely defined by the Apostle as a knowledge which is given to those who have been justified by faith.⁹

There is no suggestion in the New Testament that knowledge is either prior to faith or an advance beyond faith. In John, for example, faith and knowledge are as good as synonymous: "We have believed and know that thou art the Holy One."¹⁰ Eternal life is said to be the knowledge of the only true God or belief in the Son of man.¹¹ For John as for Paul faith is prior, and in John in particular we find that knowledge is interpreted primarily, though not apparently exclusively, in Hebraic and Old Testament terms rather than in terms of Greek epistemology.

For Greek philosophy knowledge (γῶσις) is the contemplation and the grasping of the reality (ἀλήθεια) of an object. Hence the knowledge of God is the contemplation of τὸ ὄντως ὄν . This γῶσις of God or contemplation of the divine essence deifies a man. In the Gnosticism of the

⁷Karl Barth, *Die Kirckliche Dogmatik*, Zollikon-Zurich, English translation *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. II, Pt. I, *The Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: 1947), pp. 12ff.

⁸Rom. 5:3. ⁹Rom. 5:1. ¹⁰John 6:69.

¹¹John 17:3, 3:15; cf. 7:17, 16:27-30. See R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, tr. Kendrick Grobel, (London: 1955), Vol. II, p. 73; Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John* (London: 1955), p. 68.

second century γνώσις had become, in C. H. Dodd's phrase, "a quasi-scientific knowledge of that realm of being which transcends all human experience."¹² Knowledge had now become a γνώσις τῶν ὑπερνοούων which is unlike any other objective or intellectual human knowledge, and makes men like God.

For the Old Testament, on the other hand, knowledge has little of this objective or intellectual character that it had in Hellenistic thought. It implies, rather, a personal and intimate awareness of something that affects the individual,¹³ and is inseparable from ethical behaviour. For a man to "know" God in the Old Testament does not suggest an intellectual grasp of God's existence; indeed the primary emphasis in the Old Testament is on God's knowledge of man, and only rarely is man said to have a knowledge of God. Where man is said to have a knowledge of God this knowledge is conceived in ethical terms. For the Hebrew, to know God means to acknowledge him in His works and to respond to the claim that He lays upon man. Thus Jeremiah calls on the Lord: "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy name." The lack of knowledge to which he refers, however, is ethically interpreted: "For they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate."¹⁴ Similarly, when Isaiah states that Israel

¹²Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 151.

¹³Isa. 53:3, 47:8; Ezek. 25:14; Job 20:20. ¹⁴Jer. 10:25.

has been taken into captivity "because they have no knowledge," this lack of knowledge is understood as a wilful determination in denying the claims made by God upon His people.¹⁵

When it is stated, as we already have, that in one aspect salvation is interpreted in the second century as the bringing to men of true knowledge, our first question is: Is this knowledge which the theologians of the second century state to have been given by Christ to be understood in Old Testament, New Testament, Hellenistic, or Gnostic terms?

Knowledge in Justin.

It has generally been accepted that Justin is the Christian philosopher who spoke to the Greeks, and who interpreted the Gospel in terms of Greek philosophy, notably in terms of the doctrine of the Logos. A modern commentator can thus say:

He is one of the first to strive to reconcile Christianity and Hellenic thought, by asserting that while the Church has the complete truth there are truths of philosophy as well, which, because they are true, must be due to the working of the same Logos who revealed all truth in His incarnate life, who is both the creative Word and (as the Stoics also taught) the Divine Reason.¹⁶

According to this view Christ is seen in Justin to be "the new lawgiver"¹⁷ who brings saving and illuminating knowledge to men who have forgotten the truth and lost the light of reason. Justin at times¹⁸ thinks of sin as the

¹⁵Isa. 5:13, cf. 8ff.

¹⁶H. Bettenson, The Early Christian Fathers (London: 1956), p. 13.

¹⁷Dial. 18:3. ¹⁸I Apol. 27.

loss of light, and therefore of redemption as the restoration of this light.¹⁹ It is further argued along this line of thought that whereas in the Dialogue, in which he is conversing with the Jew Trypho, Justin speaks of salvation in Messianic, dramatic, and historic terms, in the Apology, in which he is addressing the pagans as a Christian philosopher, he interprets Christianity rather as a rational and moral religion, "the only really reliable and useful philosophy that I have found."²⁰ In the Apology what Jesus brings to men is knowledge, γῶσις, and since men have implanted within them the σπέρμα ἑμψυχόν the seed of divine reason, when Jesus brings them the truth, they recognise and accept it.

Salvation by enlightenment. On the surface this appears to be a Platonic reinterpretation of the Gospel, and the case for establishing the argument that Justin has transmuted the apostolic Gospel into a philosophical form in order to make it acceptable to the Greek speaking world is apparently reinforced by other concepts, e.g. the doctrine of baptism as φωτισμός. In discussing baptism, Justin says that he will relate the manner in which Christian believers dedicated themselves to God "when we had been made new (καινοποιηθέντες), through Christ." The renewal to which he refers is the persuasion and belief that Christ's word is true, and the consequent undertaking to live in accordance with this word. It is to those with this persuasion and resolve that baptism is administered:

¹⁹I Apol. 12-19, 23. ²⁰Dial. 2, cf. 3.

Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated And this washing is called illumination (φωτισμός), because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings.²¹

This concept of what we may call "salvation by enlightenment" is fairly characteristic of this early period. In Clement of Alexandria, for example, we read:

Knowledge is enlightenment, which banishes our ignorance and administers a corrective. The casting away of the worse is the revelation of the better. For what ignorance had bound is released through growing knowledge. And these bonds are done away speedily by faith, on the part of man, by grace from the side of God, when our sins are forgiven by the spiritual medicine of baptism.²²

Clement has before this discussed baptism as enlightenment:

Being baptised, we are enlightened: being enlightened, we are adopted as sons: being adopted, we are made perfect: being made complete, we are made immortal (βαπτίζομενοι φωτίζομεθα φωτίζομενοι υιοποιούμεθα, υιοποιούμενοι τελειούμεθα, τελειούμενοι ἀπαθανατιζόμεθα).²³

The question, therefore, remains. Has Justin reinterpreted the Gospel in terms of Neo-Platonism in order to make it intelligible and acceptable in the second century environment? The first task of any evangelist is to speak to his hearers in the language that they can comprehend. Of the environment in which Justin spoke E. R. Goodenough says,

There has probably never been an age when philosophy was so familiar a topic for the street corner and barber shop as during this decadent period of Greek philosophy No normal child would have grown up in a Greek city . . . without acquiring the vocabulary of, and accustoming himself to take part in, popular philosophical discussions.²⁴

It is a constant risk that the evangelist may, in communicating his message, not simply dull the edge of the Gospel but in fact transform it into some-

²¹I Apol. 61. ²²Paedagogus, I.6.(29). ²³Paedagogus, I.6.(26).

²⁴E. R. Goodenough, The Theology of Justin Martyr (Jena: 1923), p. 31f.

thing other than it is. If Bultmann is correct in saying, "Theology's continuity through the centuries consists not in holding fast to once formulated propositions but in the constant vitality with which faith, fed by its origin, understandingly masters its constantly new historical situation,"²⁵ it is a question to be answered whether Justin has not reduced the unique word of the Gospel to a Christianised late Hellenistic philosophy.

The contrast between the Apology and the Dialogue. The problem becomes perplexing for those who hold that he has when we turn to the Dialogue after the Apology. In the latter Justin, the philosopher, speaks of Christ in terms of His person as the One who has brought to men the illuminating $\gamma\omega\iota\varsigma$. In the Dialogue, on the other hand, Justin is still the philosopher,²⁶ but his philosophy is defined as the knowledge which has been given by "certain men more ancient than all those who are esteemed philosophers," viz., the prophets "who alone saw and announced the truth to men." But the truth has come supremely through Jesus Christ, of whom Justin now speaks in terms of His work, as the One through whom men come to God.²⁷ To use our earlier terminology, the Apology represents the padnah type of redemption, redemption by the mighty act of God, whereas the Dialogue represents the ga'al type, redemption by the kinsman-Redeemer. The Apology and Dialogue are to be distinguished, as we shall see more fully later, as

²⁵Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament (London: 1955), Vol. II, p. 237.

²⁶Dial. 1; 8. ²⁷Dial. 7; cf. 45.

representing two contrasting and yet related aspects of Justin's interpretation of the person and work of Christ. At least in part this distinction is to be explained by reference to the context in which Justin is speaking; but the dichotomy is more complex than we have yet suggested. It is to the Apology that we turn primarily for Justin's exposition of Christianity as the true philosophy. In it Justin understands redemption as the illumination of men who are darkened by sin, and this redemption is the bringing through Christ the Logos of saving knowledge which is rationally apprehended, not historically revealed in the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. In the Dialogue on the other hand we are in a noticeably different line of thought. In this we find redemption defined as having been accomplished for men through the saving acts of God: much more strongly than in the Apology, the Logos is affirmed to have become incarnate for man's salvation.²⁸ Christ has come to save men by His sufferings,²⁹ cleanse and redeem them by His blood,³⁰ and give His life to redeem them as the suffering servant.³¹ While it is true that in the Apology similar terms are used to describe the work of Christ, a stronger emphasis on the works of Jesus as constituting redemptive history is to be found in the Dialogue. Again, while it is true that the Dialogue has much to say concerning Christ

²⁸Dial. 34, 43, 45, 48, 54, 63, 64, 66, 68, 75, 84, 88, 98, 99, 100, 103, 105, 113.

²⁹Dial. 74. ³⁰Dial. 13, 40, 54, 134.

³¹Dial. 26, 30, 76, 90, 91, 111, 131, 135.

as the Logos, it is quite clear that throughout Justin is speaking to Trypho as an heir of the covenant of grace which God had established with Israel, and which has come to fulfilment in the incarnation of the Word in our history.

Resurrection and baptism in the Apology. Having granted that there is a quite clear division in Justin's thought in his interpretation of the person and work of Christ, and having attempted to show that this division is more or less represented in his two main writings, we must now go on to state that even in the Apology itself, where Justin speaks as a philosopher, there is a most revealing conjunction of ideas which makes it difficult to assert dogmatically that Justin is no more than the bearer of a Hellenized evangel to the Greeks. It is remarkable, for example, that it is in the Apology that we find the thoroughly Biblical but quite un-Hellenistic idea of the resurrection of the body: "We expect to receive again our own bodies, though they be dead and cast into the earth, for we maintain that with God nothing is impossible."³² In fulfilment of prophecy, Justin affirms, "He shall come from heaven with glory, accompanied by His angelic host, when also He shall raise the bodies of all men who have lived, and shall clothe those of the worthy with immortality."³³ As we hope to show later, the concept of ἀπαράστασις, mentioned in this passage, and found commonly in the early Christian Fathers, is not to be understood in its Hel-

³²I Apol. 18. ³³I Apol. 52.

lenistic sense, but, as we regularly find in Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and others, is rather to be understood in relation to the scriptural view of the resurrection from the dead as the receiving of the spiritual "body." In one other decisive place, which we have previously mentioned, Justin's thought runs counter to the philosophical mind that he was addressing. In the main body of the Apology he has discussed what we have called "salvation by enlightenment" at the expense of well nigh neglecting to say anything at all about salvation as the intervention of God in history, that is, of redemption as the mighty work of God. But when he comes to discuss the significance of baptism in relation to this salvation, Justin interprets it as regeneration, illumination, and remission of sins, and finds his authority for the sacrament in two passages, one from the Old Testament, the other from the New.³⁴ These make it clear on the one hand that baptism is the means through which the salvation of which he has been speaking is sacramentally applied to the believer, that is, through which the believer is baptised in the baptism of Jesus Christ, and on the other hand that his interpretation of salvation as "enlightenment" cannot too easily be considered a Hellenizing of the Gospel. Even though von Campenhausen says, "It is surprising how Justin takes it for granted that the faith he is defending is a reasonable and self-evident body of insights, and how little he is offended by the doctrines that fly in the face of

³⁴Isa. 1:16-20; John 3:5.

classical philosophy,"³⁵ we are forced to conclude that there is a strong possibility that Justin was well aware that his doctrine of the resurrection of the body and baptism flew in the face of classical philosophy, and that the solution to the difficulty lies elsewhere than in saying that the Apology represents a Hellenistic reinterpretation of the Gospel.

Revelation and Redemption in Justin.

At this point, therefore, and before we come to the main teaching of Justin on the significance of the death of Jesus Christ, we shall now consider what connexion, if any, exists between revelation and redemption in Justin's writings. At present, to anticipate our conclusion, we shall state that in Justin the concept of enlightenment, or the giving of knowledge through the Logos, is one essential aspect of his full doctrine of redemption. It is his ontological interpretation of the person of Christ, and is contrasted with his dramatic or historical interpretation of the work of Christ, and the death of Jesus Christ is the connecting though at times unseen link that binds these two interpretations.

The knowledge of our bondage. We have spoken up to this point of salvation as enlightenment and the acquisition of saving knowledge; but these are vague terms, and we must now define what we mean by them more

³⁵H. von Campenhausen, Fathers of the Greek Church, English translation by Stanley Godman (New York: 1959), p. 16.

carefully. What is the true knowledge that man receives through Jesus Christ? The simple answer is to say that he receives the true knowledge of God through the organ of all revelation, namely, the Logos. But for Justin this is not the sphere in which the knowledge of which he speaks holds good. God is unknowable and hidden, and it is a hopeless madness to want to give a name to the ἄρρητος θεός.³⁶ God can be spoken of only as the ineffable. Even when we call Him God, we are still not capable of apprehending Him. Clement of Alexandria expresses this incomprehensibility of God as follows:

Thus the deity is without form and nameless. Though we ascribe names, they are not to be taken in their strict meaning; when we call Him One, Good, Mind, Existence, Father God, Creator, Lord, we are not conferring a name on Him. Being unable to do more, we use these appellations of honour, in order that our thought may have something to rest on and not wander at random.³⁷

Justin speaks in a similar way:

The Father of all has no name given him, since he is unbegotten. For a being who has a name imposed upon him has an elder to give him that name. "Father," and "God," "Creator," "Lord," "Master," are not names but appellations derived from his benefits and works. His Son (who alone is properly called Son, the Word who is with God and is begotten before the creation, when in the beginning God created and ordered all things through him) is called Christ because he was anointed and God ordered all things through him. The name Christ also contains an unknown significance (ὄνομα καὶ αὐτὸ περιέχον ἄγνωστον σημασίαν), just as the title "God" is not a name, but represents the idea, innate in human nature, of an inexpressible reality.³⁸

When, therefore Justin denies that God may be known, he means that God is

³⁶I Apol. 61; cf. Athanasius, *C. gent.* 2, cf. 35; I Clem. 33; Philo, *De mutat. nom.* 13ff.

³⁷Strom. 5.12 (82,4); cf. Irenaeus *A.h.* II.xiii.4.

³⁸II. Apol. 6.

not an object that can be apprehended by inward or by physical apprehension. And man's inability to apprehend God as He is in Himself is not removed by Christ. It is not this knowledge which is given in the revelation which we have in Christ. It is rather the knowledge of our sin and error which Christ brings to us; and in particular the knowledge of our bondage to the serpent and to the fallen angels. The devil and these demons are the enemies of Christ, but Christ has come to earth in order to destroy the power of the demons,³⁹ and in His birth, temptations, and crucifixion He reveals His superiority to them and His triumph over them.⁴⁰ Christ has destroyed the demons and asserted His authority over all principalities and kingdoms.⁴¹ The place of His triumph, however, is the cross. It is the crucified who reigns over His enemies.

It is this knowledge which Christ reveals to us. While it is true that Christ has come to teach men, our Teacher is the one who "was crucified under Pontius Pilate."⁴² It is this that constitutes the mystery to which believers are bidden to give heed. What we are seeing, in other words, is that for Justin our redemption is the apprehension that Christ who is the Truth is also Christ the Saviour. We are enlightened, to use the phrase of Ignatius, by the unspeakable light of the star which shone in heaven brighter than all other stars, that is, by Christ, who has removed the

³⁹I Apol. 45, Dial. 45. ⁴⁰Dial. 78, 103, 125; cf. 49. ⁴¹Dial. 131.

⁴²I Apol. 13: Our διδάσκαλος is the σταυρωθείς. Cf. II Apol.

ignorance of wickedness and destroyed the ancient kingdom: "Then what had been completed in the purpose of God began to be enacted: hence the whole universe was stirred, because the destruction of death was being undertaken."⁴³

It was the heresy of Gnosticism that redemption is to be interpreted almost exclusively in terms of the illuminative knowledge which is brought by Christ the Teacher. The combination of light and life is characteristic of the Gnostic writings, in which the bestowal of light (φῶς, γνῶσις) alone can bring men life or salvation. Thus in the Hermetica the work of the Redeemer is described as follows: φωτίσω τοὺς ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ τοῦ γένους, μοῦ ἀδελφοὺς, υἱοὺς δὲ σοῦ .⁴⁴ The man who has been redeemed bears witness, εἰς ζωὴν καὶ φῶς χωρὶ .⁴⁵ For Justin, however, redemption is to be understood as the γνῶσις which is brought to us by the crucified. In the bringing of this γνῶσις, however, we are to discern the mighty act of God for our redemption. For Justin, that is to say, salvation as enlightenment is interpreted in terms of the padhah concept of redemption. We are not to divide the theology of Justin into two parts, one Hebraic and the other Hellenistic, and insist that whereas in the Dialogue we find an understanding of redemption as having been achieved through the works of Christ, in the Apology we find a line of thought which is philosophical and Hellenistic, and an understanding of redemption as enlightenment. Justin cannot be so

⁴³Eph. 19. ⁴⁴Corp. Herm. 1.32. ⁴⁵Ibid.

neatly divided. We therefore repeat that in Justin the concept of enlightenment through the Logos and deliverance from death through the death of Christ together constitute a single doctrine of redemption, and that the bond which connects these two contrasting but related interpretations is the death of Christ. We must now, therefore, study in closer detail the relationship between Justin's doctrine of redemption and the unifying concept of the death of Jesus Christ.

II. REDEMPTION THROUGH THE LOGOS CRUCIFIED

Christianity a Rational Religion.

For Justin Christianity is a rational religion. There is nothing particularly remarkable in this view in the second century. The world mission of the Church demanded that the Gospel be explained to the Greek-speaking world in which "a welter of crude superstitions were expressed in myth and in snatches of philosophical terminology."⁴⁶ Philosophical terms such as νοῦς and λόγος were part of the common language of the day. How did Christianity explain itself in these terms? The writers of the Epistle of Barnabas⁴⁷ the Epistle to Diognetus,⁴⁸ and others had partially attempted to express the Gospel in philosophical terms, but Justin is the first to affirm the connexion between Christianity and philosophy. It is, he maintains, the duty of philosophy to "investigate concerning the divine

⁴⁶Goodenough, Theology of Justin Martyr, p. 31.

⁴⁷Ep. 1. ⁴⁸Ep. to Diog. 11, 12.

(ἔξετάζειν περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ),⁴⁹ and since Christ is the sum of rationality (τὸ λογικὸν τὸ ὅλον),⁵⁰ the rational power who has been ^{begotten} created by God ^{out of himself} (δύναμιν τινα λογικὴν),⁵¹ pagan philosophy is a preparation for the revelation which we have in Jesus Christ. To this Christ the prophets of the Old Testament bear witness, and these preceded in time and inspiration the esteemed philosophers such as Plato and Pythagoras.⁵²

The Son of God is a rational power (δύναμις λογικὴ), who has been generated from the Father without any diminution of His substance.⁵³ He is the firstborn of the unbegotten God (πρωτότοκος τῷ ἀγεννήτῳ θεῷ),⁵⁴ and "proceeded before all creatures from the Father by His power and will."⁵⁵ We have previously seen how Justin's Apology and Dialogue differ in their conception of the meaning of salvation. A similar difference can be discerned in regard to the doctrine of the Logos which we find in each. Since we want to discuss the incarnation and passion of the Logos, it will be helpful first to consider this distinction in the interpretation of the Logos.

⁴⁹Dial. 1. ⁵⁰I Apol. 5. ⁵¹Dial. 61.

⁵²Dial. 7. ⁵³Dial. 128. ⁵⁴I Apol. 53.

⁵⁵Dial. 100. In II Apol. 6, Justin says that the Son "was with Him and was begotten before the works (καὶ συνὼν καὶ γεννόμενος πρὸ τῶν ποιημάτων)" which suggests Origen's "eternal generation" of the Son. Justin could not say with Tertullian "fuit tempus cum filius non fuit" (Hermog. 3). Donaldson's reading of ὅτε for ὅτι in this passage is therefore in error (History of Christian Literature, Vol. II, PT. III, p. 221).

In the Apology Justin the philosopher speaks to readers to whom the philosophical concepts of which he makes mention were not unknown. Chief among these was the concept of the Logos. He writes:

For not only among the Greeks did reason (λόγος) prevail to condemn these things through Socrates, but also among the barbarians were they condemned by Reason Himself (ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ λόγου), who took shape, and became man, and was called Jesus Christ.⁵⁶

The doctrine of the Logos in philosophy. In origin λόγος was a psychological concept meaning thought in expression before it acquired metaphysical significance in the development of Greek philosophy. Heraclitus had called the Logos "an omnipresent and cosmic intelligence and reasoning force."⁵⁷ For him it was the rational principle in the world-process which comes to self-consciousness in the mind of the philosopher. Plato has little to say about the Logos as such. He has much more to say about God the Creator as νοῦς .⁵⁸ This νοῦς is for Plato the inherent rational principle of the universe and is imparted to men and acknowledged by them as τὸ ἡγεμονικόν .⁵⁹ There are, however, in Plato two little noted matters of doctrine which are of considerable interest to us and related to our present study. On the one hand Plato teaches that the cosmos has a soul, the function of which is to subordinate the element of necessity to

⁵⁶I Apol. 5. ⁵⁷Heraclitus, I.

⁵⁸Tim. 39e; Phil. 29.b.3-31.a.10.

⁵⁹This was later defined by the Stoics as τὸ κυριώτατον τῆς ψυχῆς, ἐν ᾧ αἱ φαντασίαι καὶ αἱ ὁρμαὶ γίνονται (Diog. Laert. 7.159).

reason. From this cosmic soul emanates the human soul, which can be separated into the three parts of the appetite (ἐπιθυμία, or τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν), resolution (θυμός, or τὸ θυμοειδές), and reason (λόγος, or τὸ λογιστικὸν μέρος).⁶⁰ Reason is the immortal part of the soul, because by ἀνάμνησις it becomes conscious of the ἰδέαι which for Plato constituted the world of a priori reality and of which the present world of a posteriori appearance is but a shadow.⁶¹ It becomes conscious of the ἰδέαι because it is akin to the object of its consciousness. In Plato, that is to say, we find λόγος as the connecting link between the ideal world and the soul of man.

On the other hand, however, there is a notable passage in Plato which surprisingly has been ignored by commentators on Justin. In the Phaedo he writes:

If a man can neither find the truth by the exercise of his own faculties, nor learn it through the help of another, then having chosen that which is at all events the best and most irrefragable of human doctrines, he ought to embark thereon, like a mariner going to sea on a raft (in default of a better conveyance), and sail through life's voyage, that is to say, unless it were possible to proceed on one's way more securely and with less danger on some firmer vessel, or on some divine doctrine (εἰ μή τις δύναιτο ἀσφαλέστερον καὶ ἀκινδυνότερον ἐπὶ βεβαιότερου ὀχήματος ἢ λόγου θείου τινος διαπορευθῆναι).⁶²

If, that is, man cannot come to full ἐπιστήμη by his own searching, let

⁶⁰Pol. 4.439d.

⁶¹Theaet. 151ff.; Soph. 218ff.; Phileb. 15, 54, 58ff.; Parmen. 130ff., and especially Rep. books VI and VII.

⁶²Phaedo 85d.

him trust himself to the best human doctrines, unless he can find some divine word. Socrates, as Plato records,⁶³ had frequently spoken of God's communication, and it may be that the passage in Phaedo refers to the "Voice" which Socrates claimed he had heard. It may, however, also be likely that Justin, who frequently echoes Platonic ideas, was well aware of this expression of longing in the philosopher, and as a Christian believer who knew the Verbum incarnatum, could write:

When you hear the utterances of the prophets spoken as it were personally, you must not suppose that they are spoken by the inspired themselves, but by the divine word who moves them (ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τοῦ κινούντος αὐτοὺς θεοῦ λόγου).⁶⁴

Christ Himself, declares Justin, is the Logos who gives us what Peter calls in his epistle the βεβαιότερος λόγος.⁶⁵ the One who spoke through the prophets, and who has become known to us as the Crucified and whom the prophets have predicted.⁶⁶ Again we note that Justin speaks of the Logos not simply in terms of His person but in terms also of His work, i.e. His passion.

We shall pass by the subsequent development of the idea of Logos in the Greek philosophers except that we shall pause briefly to see how this concept was expressed in Stoicism and Hellenistic syncretism. When Justin Martyr wrote his Apology Stoicism, a philosophical system embracing logic, theology, and ethics, had behind it some five hundred years of development.

⁶³Pol. 9.590d.; Tm. 72d. ⁶⁴I Apol. 36.

⁶⁵II Pet. 1:19. ⁶⁶I Apol. 36, end.

In short, Stoicism reacted against the Platonic distinction between a transcendent ideal world and the present world of sensible experience. For the Stoics ἰδέαι had no objective existence. Stoicism was a form of religious pantheism in which God was identified with the universe. Within this universe there was what can be called a passive and an active principle: the former being ὕλη or crude matter, the latter λόγος or reason, which is identified with God, and which is manifested as εἰμαρμένη, fate, and προνοία, divine providence. Among the elements fire was most closely related to the Logos, and this fire was the all-pervading principle of life from which all crude matter or ὕλη was derived, and into which all matter would be reabsorbed in a periodical world conflagration or ἐκπύρωσις. About a century after Zeno, however, this doctrine of universal conflagration was being rejected by Panaetius (c. 185 - 109 B.C.), and by the second century after Christ it had ceased to be a significant part of Stoic philosophy. But the doctrine of the Logos was remarkably developed. For the Stoics Logos is the formative principle in nature, and it is the aim of the philosopher to live in harmony with nature by following the guidance of Logos, ὁμολογουμένως φύσει ζῆν. The Logos, however, is not only the dynamic rational principle active in the world-whole, but each part of the whole contains a seed of the Logos, the so-called λόγος σπερματικός. The relationship, therefore, between man and the God-universe is comparable to the relationship between the spermatic logos in each man and the Logos which is the cosmic rational principle. Ethically, however, the Stoics also taught a doctrine of the ὁρθός λόγος which is common both to the gods and to men, and which is the means

of communication between them.⁶⁷

In Hellenistic syncretism the Logos becomes a religious concept, while in Philo we find a Stoic interpretation of the Logos as a rational world principle blended with a religiously interpreted Platonic doctrine of the Logos as the sum of the transcendent ἰδέαι. That is to say on the one hand Philo interprets the Logos as the agent of God in creation and the means by which the divine is apprehended by the mind. The Logos is the Mediator between God and man.⁶⁸ On the other hand the Logos is the sum of Platonic ideas, and is identified with the ideal world of which the present world is a copy.⁶⁹

The doctrine of Logos in Justin. In Justin we see these Platonic and Stoic ideas recurring, but in a different way. The Logos is the first-begotten of God,⁷⁰ the only proper Son who has been begotten by God, being His Word and first-begotten, and power.⁷¹ He is God,⁷² begotten before creation,⁷³ and the Son of the Father of the universe by whom God conceived and made the world.⁷⁴ Justin shares the view held by most of the Apologists

⁶⁷See W. L. Davidson, The Stoic Creed, 1907; E. Bevan, Stoics and Sceptics, 1913; O. Rieth, Grundbegriffe der stoischen Ethik, 1933.

⁶⁸See de cherub. 125-7; de migrat. Abrah. 174.

⁶⁹De opif. mundi, 20; 24. ⁷⁰I Apol. 21, πρῶτον γέννημα.

⁷¹I Apol. 23, μόνος ἰδίως υἱὸς τῷ θεῷ λόγος αὐτοῦ ὑπάρχων καὶ πρωτότοκος καὶ δύναμις.

⁷²I Apol. 63, θεὸς ὑπάρχει.

⁷³II Apol. 6 ὁ λόγος πρὸ τῶν ποιημάτων καὶ συνῶν καὶ γεννόμενος. Cf. also I Apol. 45, when Justin cites Ps. 110:1, which in the context might suggest tendencies, but Justin conceives an absolute unity between the

of the second century that the Son is co-eternal with the Father.⁷⁵ Before the incarnation of Christ men had possessed the λόγος σπερματικός by which they had been enabled to discern the truth, at least in part. The seed of reason has been implanted in every race of men,⁷⁶ and pagan philosophers owed their wisdom and rational utterance to the Logos which was implanted in them.⁷⁷

For each man spoke well in proportion to the share he had of the spermatic word, seeing what was related to it. But they who contradict themselves on the more important points appear not to have possessed the heavenly wisdom, and the knowledge which cannot be spoken against.⁷⁸

Those, therefore, who have lived μετὰ λόγου ⁷⁹ before the coming of Christ, such as the philosopher Socrates,⁸⁰ the Stoics,⁸¹ and others, were Christians even before Christ appeared. All who search for truth are prompted by the indwelling of the spermatic Logos.⁸² In every man there is implanted this divine particle, λόγος, and therefore there is no fundamental opposition between Christianity and pagan philosophy. But since the philosophers did not know the whole of the Word which is Christ (ἐπειδὴ δὲ οὐ πάντα τὰ τοῦ λόγου ἐγνώρισαν, ὅς ἐστι Χριστός),⁸³ their teachings were

Father and the Logos: see I Apol. 6, 10, 12, 13. See also I. A. Dorner, History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ, Vol. I, Pt. I, note TTTT; V. A. Spence Little, The Christology of the Apologists (London: 1934), pp. 120-30.

⁷⁴I Apol. 63, 64. ⁷⁵II Apol. 6, I Apol. 63. ⁷⁶II Apol. 8.

⁷⁷II Apol. 10. ⁷⁸II Apol. 13. ⁷⁹I Apol. 46. ⁸⁰I Apol. 5.

⁸¹II Apol. 8. ⁸²II Apol. 10. ⁸³II Apol. 10.

often contradictory.

The Logos for Justin is the means of communication between God and man: "Now the Word of God is His Son He declares whatever we ought to know, and is sent forth to declare whatever is revealed."⁸⁴ He is the mediator of revelation to all races: "We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above that He is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who live μετὰ λόγου are Christians."⁸⁵ It is this same Word who has spoken through and inspired the prophets.⁸⁶

If at this point we were to consider what Justin meant by the incarnation of the Word, which for him is the great fact of the Gospel,⁸⁷ we would perhaps consider that the purpose of the incarnation was to teach men wisdom and no more, that is, to be a revelation in the flesh of that wisdom or reason which pagan philosophers cultivated and the prophets of the Old Testament witnessed to. And yet Justin does not say this. For when he begins to speak about the work of the Logos in His incarnation his conception of redemption is not a Gnostically inclined salvation through enlightenment, but salvation through the dramatic act of God in freeing men from their bondage to the demons. Thus Justin does not think of redemption solely in terms of enlightenment, but bases his conception of the work of

⁸⁴I Apol. 63. ⁸⁵I Apol. 46. ⁸⁶I Apol. 33, 36.

⁸⁷See I Apol. 5, 23, 32, 33, 63, 66; II Apol. 6, 10, 13; Dial. 34, 43, 45, 48, 54, 63, 64, 66, 68, 75, 84, 88, 98, 99, 100, 103, 105, 113.

Christ on the Old Testament (padhah) type of redemption, and, as we have previously stated, in particular looks to the passion and death of Christ as the ground of our faith.

Sin and free will. We do not find in Justin, as we do, say, in Irenaeus, any conception of the radical sinfulness and wrong of man. Indeed, Justin's main ethical doctrine is that of human free will. In this he is one with the other Apologists of the second century, but unlike them his concept of free will was not balanced by a corresponding concept of the sinfulness of man. Man's free will is exercised, he maintained, in choices between good and evil: "In the beginning He made the human race with the power of thought and of choosing the truth and doing right."⁸⁸ Justin, of course, was engaged in battle with the Stoic doctrine of submission to fate.. According to the Stoics, since all that God had done in the world was for man's good, man must submit to fate and live καθ' εἰμαρμένης ἀναγὰν. Justin sets himself resolutely against this Stoic doctrine, and asserts man's free choice (προαιρέσις ἐλευθέρα), and accountability for his actions.⁸⁹ While it might be thought that prophecy would suggest a divine fore-knowledge which contradicted human free will, Justin maintains against this that what is foretold by the prophets comes about not by any fatal necessity, but within the providence though not by the fore-ordination of God: "If the word of God foretells that some angels and men shall be cer-

⁸⁸I Apol. 28. ⁸⁹I Apol. 46, cf. II Apol. 7.

tainly punished, it did so because it foreknew that they would be unchangeably wicked, but not because God had created them so."⁹⁰

The polemical situation in which Justin denied the Stoic doctrine of fate weakened his theological interpretation of man. Man is made good, with power to choose good,⁹¹ and this choice is freely made.⁹² At no point does Justin appear to have any concept of an inherent corruption in man as a fallen creature who is wholly incapable of choosing the good and rejecting evil, except in a significant passage in which he states that the demons can take as their ally "the lust of wickedness which is in every man, and which draws variously to all manner of vice" (τὴν ἐν ἐθάστω κακὴν πρὸς πάντα καὶ ποικίλην φύσει ἐπιθυμίαν).⁹³ In the Dialogue Justin discusses the crucifixion of Christ "because of the human race," and defines the necessity of the human race as its mortality and sinfulness from the time of Adam, i.e. he conceives of the transgression of Adam as being the beginning, but not the cause of sin and death in the human race. As if to leave no doubt in the minds of his readers that this is his meaning he goes on at once to argue that since men were endowed by the Creator with free will, "if they chose the things acceptable to Himself, He would keep them free from death and from punishment."⁹⁴

⁹⁰Dial. 141. ⁹¹I Apol. 10,28; II Apol. 7. ⁹²I Apol. 10,43.

⁹³I Apol. 10. Justin defines sin in II Apol. 14.4 as "erroneous notions and ignorance of good," ψευδοδοξία καὶ ἄγνοια τῶν καλῶν.

⁹⁴Dial. 88; cf. Dial. 100, "Eve brought forth disobedience and death." But Justin seems in this passage to be doing no more than

The work of the demons. If, then, there is no hereditary taint in the human race, where has evil and ignorance come from? For Justin there is a simple answer. All evil is to be ascribed to the working of demons. Justin accepted the familiar explanation of the origin of demons. God had committed the care of men and all things under heaven to angels whom He appointed over them, but these angels were degraded by intercourse with women (γυναικῶν μίξεσιν ἡττήθησαν), and produced demons.⁹⁵ From that time the demons have opposed reason⁹⁶ i.e. they have set themselves against Logos. They have deceived men and try to hold them in slavery.⁹⁷ They were responsible for pagan mythology,⁹⁸ the deities of which had the names and forms of the demons. Since these demons have always been opposed to reason, and have attempted to destroy any who have sought to deliver men from their influence, for example, Socrates,⁹⁹ the persecution of Christians is evident proof of the demonic origin of this hostility.¹⁰⁰ It is the demons who are responsible for attempting to overpower the divine element of reason in men. Men are capable of choosing the truth and doing right, "for they have been

drawing a parallel between the virgin Eve and the Virgin Mary. See the discussion in Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, p. 167.

⁹⁵II Apol. 5. Cf. Athenagoras, Suppl. 24,121; Tertullian, Apol. 22. The idea is first elaborated in Enoch.

⁹⁶I Apol. 5,12,14,21,23,25,56,57,58; II Apol. 7,9,; Dial. 79,83.

⁹⁷I Apol. 14, cf. 58. ⁹⁸I Apol. 5. ⁹⁹I Apol. 5.

¹⁰⁰I Apol. 5,10,12,23,57; II Apol. 1,13.

born rational and contemplative,¹⁰¹ but they are brought up in an environment of bad habits and wicked training¹⁰² and from the time of Adam have been under the power of death and the guile of the serpent.¹⁰³

Supremely, however, the opposition of the demons has come to a climax in the sufferings and death of Christ, and has finally and absolutely been destroyed in the place where they were revealed in the full extent of their hostility. The overthrow of the angels was the purpose of the incarnation:

This Christ, Son of God, . . . submitted to become incarnate, and be born of this virgin of the family of David, in order that, by this dispensation, the serpent that sinned from the beginning, and the angels like him, may be destroyed, and that death may be contemned.¹⁰⁴

The demons recognised the "Lord of the powers" and trembled before Him when they saw Him crucified.¹⁰⁵ By His death Christ has utterly overthrown the powers and principalities that stood against Him,¹⁰⁶ and has broken the power of the serpent which occasioned the transgression of Adam.¹⁰⁷

The work of Christ in revealing truth. At this point we see clearly how strong the motif of conflict and victory has become in Justin's interpretation of the incarnation and death of Christ. Before His incarnation the demons had wrought havoc upon men, leading them astray and making them slaves.¹⁰⁸ But Christ has come, and has given men illumination, φωτισμός. Christians are those of whom Justin speaks as οἱ διὰ Ἰησοῦ φωτισμένοι .¹⁰⁹

¹⁰¹I Apol. 28. ¹⁰²I Apol. 61. ¹⁰³Dial. 88. ¹⁰⁴Dial. 45.

¹⁰⁵Dial. 49. ¹⁰⁶Dial. 41. ¹⁰⁷Dial. 94. ¹⁰⁸I Apol. 54, 14.

¹⁰⁹I Apol. 61.

What before the incarnation of Christ was a dim apprehension of truth and reason in man has now been clearly illuminated and confirmed. Christ comes to man, and enables him to see the truth. It is quite obvious that Justin is here thinking and writing in Platonic terms, for he argues that all men know something of divine truth through the σπερμὰ ἐμψυτόν, and that when Jesus brings the truth to men, they recognise it. As a midwife is needed at birth, so man in his unredeemed state needs a teacher to bring him to the light of truth, and this is the nature of the redemption won for us through Jesus Christ. The Logos incarnate is our Teacher who, bringing us to truth, enables us to live rationally, μετὰ λόγου, and gives us the possibility of gaining incorruption, ἀφθαρσία .¹¹⁰ The redemptive work of Christ is thus to effect a conversion of the will to reason and truth by imparting a bias towards truth and right.¹¹¹ This interpretation of salvation certainly colours Justin's view of faith. This has become assent to Christ's teaching as it has been delivered to the Church¹¹² and it is defined rather as a future hope than as a present experience.¹¹³ Faith at this point has become intellectualised to mean the acceptance of Christ's word as the truth, and the Christian life is one of obedience to the truth of God as we have it in Christ. By this obedience men will be deemed worthy of reigning with God, freed from corruption and suffering.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰I Apol. 13. ¹¹¹I Apol. 61. ¹¹²I Apol. 65.

¹¹³I Apol. 8, 10, 14, 42, 65; II Apol. 1, 2; Dial. 35, 44, 53, 92, 100, 111, 116.

¹¹⁴I Apol. 10, and cf. 8, 19, 28, 32, 65, 66; II Apol. 1, 4, 8, 12; Dial. 13, 15, 28, 41, 44, 47, 129.

Enlightenment through Christ Crucified.

In all this, it is true, we have a Platonising of the Gospel, but we cannot make such a simple statement as this and leave it unqualified. At the same time Justin interprets the salvation which has been secured for men in terms of conflict and victory as well as of enlightenment through truth. Thus for Justin the Gospel is essentially a revelation of truth through the Logos who was crucified. Christ is the eternal and final law¹¹⁵ through whom men may approach God, that is, He is the Teacher or Enlightener of men, but He has also become incarnate and has suffered in order to destroy the demons:

(God) makes it manifest that through Jesus, who was crucified, of whom also those symbols were fore-announcements of all that would happen to Him, the demons would be destroyed, and would dread His name, and that all principalities and kingdoms would fear Him.¹¹⁶

Christ has become man for the human race by the will of God and has "endured all the sufferings which the devils instigated the senseless Jews to inflict upon Him."¹¹⁷ And this suffering is the salvation of men. Thus Justin comments on Psalm 96 and interprets the "wonderful works" of which it speaks of the passion of Christ:

He bids the inhabitants of all the earth, who have known the mystery of this salvation, i.e. the suffering of Christ, by which He saved them, sing and give praises to God the Father of all things, and recognise that He is to be praised and feared, and that He is the Maker of heaven and earth, who effected this salvation in behalf of the human race, who also was crucified and was dead, and was deemed worthy by Him (sc. God)

¹¹⁵Dial. 11,43. ¹¹⁶Dial. 131, cf. II Apol. 6. ¹¹⁷I Apol. 63.

to reign over all the earth.¹¹⁸

It is, of course, true that Justin interprets the sufferings of Christ characteristically as the means of the amendment of error rather than, as in Irenaeus, as the means by which man's bondage to sin and death is removed. Thus he writes: "He became man for our sakes, that, becoming a partaker of our sufferings, He might also bring us healing."¹¹⁹ But the "healing" to which Justin refers is predominantly if not exclusively the instruction of men's ignorance and the illumination of the darkness of the falsehood for which the evil spirits are responsible. Justin thus conceives of redemption as the enlightenment of Christ who is the Teacher of truth. But we still have to say more! Scholars have examined Justin's philosophical concept of the Deity, notably in the Apology, and have found that even in this philosophical context he frequently touches on the passion of Christ.¹²⁰ They have then assumed that Justin has wrestled with two quite different concepts of Deity, the transcendent God of Platonic philosophy and the incarnate Word of the Christian faith, without reconciling the two. Alternatively, they have examined in the Apology the doctrine of the Logos which Justin expounds as the point of contact between Christianity and philosophy. At the same time, however, these scholars have found even within the Apology itself the unphilosophical concept of the resurrection of the

¹¹⁸Dial. 74. ¹¹⁹II Apol. 13.

¹²⁰To quote only the references in the Apology, I Apol. 32, 56, 70, 103, 63, 46, 55, etc.

body. Again they have been forced to assume that Justin has wrestled with two contrasting concepts, without reconciling them.

As we have previously suggested, however, the categories of revelation and redemption in Justin are inseparable, and cannot be interpreted exclusively in terms of enlightenment or passion, but rather in terms of enlightenment through the One who suffered. Justin, that is, has both an ontological interpretation of the person of Christ as the Logos through whom men have true knowledge, and a dramatic or historical interpretation of the work of Christ as the Sufferer¹²¹ through whom men are delivered, as by the hand of God, from the bondage in which they are held.

We have already granted that the healing which Justin affirms to have come to men through the cross is to be considered as deliverance from the bondage of error. But Justin has much more than this to say about the cross. Jesus is our Teacher, and He has assumed our humanity in order to save us, and has suffered in order to purify those who believe in Him. If there is a strong philosophical element in Justin's doctrine of redemption, there is correspondingly a strong emphasis on Christ's assumption of

¹²¹Cf. the references in I Apol. to Isa. 53, as a source for understanding the passion of Christ, I Apol. 46,55 and cf. II Apol. 6. In the Dialogue, such references are much more frequent: Dial. III, 134, 91, 131, 90, 30, 76, 26. In the light of these passages we question the verdict of F. Loofs, Dogmengeschichte, p. 122: "(The Apologists) combined their Christology with cosmology, but they were not able to combine it with soteriology. Their doctrine of the Logos is not a higher Christology than was in vogue; rather, it falls behind the genuinely Christian estimate of Christ." Cf. also A. Harnack, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte (Tübingen: 1909), E. T. History of Dogma (London: 1896-9), Vol. II, pp. 220ff., 225ff. We would also question A. Ritschl's view that Justin restricts Christ's redemption to teaching, Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung (Bonn: 1874), Vol. II, p. 5.

our frail humanity to redeem it, and the place at which that assumption of our humanity is most evident is the cross.¹²² The Teacher of men is the Saviour of men. The Word who is from of old, "appearing sometimes in the form of fire, and sometimes in the likeness of angels" has become man for the human race:

And of old He appeared in the shape of fire and in the likeness of an angel to Moses and to the other prophets; but now in the times of your reign, having, as we before said, become man by a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, for the salvation of those who believe on Him, He endured both to be set at nought and to suffer, that by dying and rising again He might conquer death.¹²³

In a passage such as this we are far from Platonic reinterpretation of the Gospel, and even though Justin does not expound how the suffering and death of Christ delivers men from sin and death, the concepts with which he is now dealing are solidly Biblical. The connexion between Christ's person as Teacher and His work as Saviour is made explicit in a passage such as the following:

We praise (our Maker) to the utmost of our power by the exercise of prayer and thanksgiving for all things wherewith we are supplied, as we have been taught . . . to present before Him petitions for our existing again in incorruption through faith in Him. Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ, who also was born for this purpose, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate.¹²⁴

The mystery to which Justin bids his readers give heed is the "madness" of giving a crucified man a place second to the unchangeable and

¹²²Cf. I Apol. 66, and see Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, p. 196f. Kelly sees this passage as one in which "Justin is feeling his way to the conception of the eucharist as the offering of the Saviour's passion." This is perhaps too strong; but at least Justin here shows the cross as the redemptive act of Christ in our humanity.

¹²³I Apol. 63. ¹²⁴I Apol. 13.

eternal God -- it is the disclosure that the One who was crucified under Pontius Pilate is the One who spoke through the prophets and who was sought by some among every race. The Teacher of all men is the Logos who was crucified: "For of all races of men there are some who look for Him who was crucified in Judaea."¹²⁵ The man who is washed (sc. baptised) in the name of the Crucified is illuminated, ἐπ' ὁνόματος δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σταυρωθέντος . . . ὁ φωτιζόμενος λούεται.¹²⁶ This, then, is the heart of the Gospel for Justin: "He became man for our sakes, that, becoming a partaker of our sufferings, He might also bring us healing."¹²⁷

Having now discussed the connexion between revelation and redemption in Justin, we shall conclude this chapter with a discussion of the meaning of the sufferings and death of Christ in relation to our own deliverance from death. We have seen that where predominantly in the Apology Justin speaks of redemption as enlightenment through the Logos, and yet holds to the assertion that this enlightenment comes through the crucified, in the Dialogue the sphere of debate alters and Justin speaks to the Jew Trypho of the mighty acts of God. But here again it is the passion of Christ which occupies a co-ordinating and central position.

¹²⁵I Apol. 32. ¹²⁶I Apol. 61. ¹²⁷II Apol. 13.

III. REDEMPTION AS THE WORK OF CHRIST IN DELIVERING MEN FROM DEATH

Redemption as a Historic Event.

Though, as we have seen, there is no rigid dichotomy between the Apology and the Dialogue in regard to Justin's interpretation of the person and work of Jesus Christ, it is fairly clearly established that the former expounds the person of Christ as the Logos, and the latter the work of Christ as the Saviour. We have also, however, tried to show that in the Apology the essential Biblical doctrine of Christ as the incarnate Word through whom men are delivered from sin and death is clearly present and important, if not predominant. In the Apology Justin is speaking as the Christian to the Hellenists, and with some justification we can define the theme of this work as "salvation as enlightenment," or the bestowal of true knowledge through the Logos. We are to remember, however, that for Justin this true knowledge is given to men by the Logos incarnate and crucified. If now we find in the Dialogue the theme of "salvation as deliverance from death," we are not suggesting that this is the exclusive concern of this other work. Justin has much to say in the Apology about deliverance from death. But in the Dialogue we find a different polemical situation, and therefore a different emphasis on the meaning of the Gospel. Justin is speaking to the Jew Trypho, or Tarphon, who was instructing "god-fearers" for baptism at the time of the Passover. In contrast, Justin is the minister of Christ who has the care of training catechumens for baptism and par-

taking of the Eucharist. Inevitably the discussion in the Dialogue turns on Jesus Christ the Messiah, foretold by the prophets, rather than, as in the Apology, on Jesus Christ the Logos, known to the philosophers, and incarnate for our enlightenment.

The basis of the discussion in the Dialogue is different, the atmosphere is different, and the concept of redemption is markedly different. In the Apology Justin has affirmed Christianity to be a rational and moralistic religion. Men's minds have been vitiated and led from truth by the demons who have always opposed the Logos and His works. But Jesus has come to destroy the demons, and allow men to contemplate God. Jesus is the bringer of truth and enlightenment. He comes to natural man and enables him to see the truth, and natural man, now seeing the truth, is enabled to live rationally and look forward to immortality as the reward of his obedience. In the Dialogue, however, Justin speaks of redemption in historic and dramatic terms. The purpose of Christ's coming is stated now quite explicitly to have been the destruction of the devil and the putting to nought of death:

Since those who did that which is universally, naturally, and eternally good are pleasing God, they shall be saved through this Christ in the resurrection equally with those righteous men who were before them . . . along with those who have known this Christ, Son of God, who was before the morning star and the moon, and submitted to become incarnate, and be born of this virgin of the family of David, in order that, by this dispensation, the serpent that sinned from the beginning, and the angels like him, may be destroyed, and that death may be contemned.¹²⁸

¹²⁸Dial. 45.

The humanity of Christ. In the Dialogue more than in the Apology Justin lays stress on the incarnation, humanity, passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, and correspondingly on redemption as historical and contingent rather than rational. Christ is the One who by His birth of the Virgin¹²⁹ has intervened in our humanity. He has grown up to manhood "like all other men"¹³⁰ and has truly assumed our humanity.¹³¹ The significance of this emphasis on the humanity of Jesus which we find in the Dialogue is that mankind's redemption is being enacted by the man, Jesus Christ, in man's humanity and man's history. Human history is the arena of the mighty acts of God. Thus Justin, in a way similar to Irenaeus, draws a parallel between Eve and Mary, the former representing the one through whom disobedience and death came upon man, and the latter the one through whom was to be born the Saviour who destroyed man's disobedience. And it is in our humanity that Christ "works deliverance from death":

He became man by the Virgin, in order that the disobedience which proceeded from the serpent might receive its destruction in the same manner in which it derived its origin. For Eve, who was a virgin and undefiled, having conceived the word of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary received faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced the good tidings to her that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her And by her He has been born, to whom we have proved so many scriptures refer, and by whom God destroys both the serpent and those angels and men who are like him; but works deliverance from death to those who repent of their wickedness and be-

¹²⁹Dial. 43,54. Justin frequently speaks of the Virgin Birth.

¹³⁰Dial. 88.

¹³¹Dial. 84,98; cf. II Apol. 10 where Justin speaks of $\sigma\mu\alpha$, $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\nu$, and $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta\acute{\nu}$ in connection with Christ.

lieve upon Him.¹³²

The sufferings of Christ. In our humanity Christ encounters the enemy of man, Satan, and in His baptism at the Jordan, in the temptations in the wilderness,¹³³ and supremely in His sufferings, He is the One who takes upon Himself the sin of His people as the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament¹³⁴ by whose stripes we are healed. Though the doctrine of Christ's redemptive sufferings is not entirely absent from the Apology¹³⁵ it is much more frequently found in the Dialogue. Christ is the sinless, holy, and righteous Son of God¹³⁶ who has "truly become man capable of suffering."¹³⁷ Christ had to suffer for our sake: "The Father wished His Son really to undergo such sufferings for our sakes."¹³⁸ It is to the Dialogue that we turn to find what Justin has to say about the events of Holy Week, though he occasionally refers to them in the Apology. Buttressing his statements with Messianic quotations from the Old Testament Justin discusses the trial, our Lord's silence, His dismissal to Herod, the parting of His garments, the mockery of the Jews, and the cry of dereliction on the cross.¹³⁹ He had become "truly a suffering man." Repeatedly Justin

¹³²Dial. 100. ¹³³Dial. 103.

¹³⁴The preponderance of quotations from the Old Testament is to be found, quite naturally, in the Dialogue.

¹³⁵I Apol. 66, cf. 32. ¹³⁶Dial. 23, 98, 110, 119. ¹³⁷Dial. 98.

¹³⁸Dial. 103, cf. 99.

¹³⁹Dial. 103; 102, 103; 103; 97, 103; 101; and 99 respectively.

speaks of Christ in terms of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. Christ has been led like a sheep to the slaughter, and like the servant of whom Isaiah speaks, has been delivered over to death by God for the transgressions of the people.¹⁴⁰ He is the One of whose suffering and cross the Psalmist writes when he says, "They pierced my hands and my feet."¹⁴¹ And it is by the will of God that He has suffered for the sins of the people.¹⁴² This is the "mystery of Him who was crucified," that through this suffering Messiah God has had compassion on all races of believing men.¹⁴³ God has acted in history, and supremely through the suffering, dishonour, and rejection of Christ, and thus, as the scriptures declare, salvation has been won for men.

Christ's redemption in our humanity. Justin lays little stress on the teachings of Jesus as these are recorded in the parables, though he does refer to the parable of the sower.¹⁴⁴ He quotes briefly and quite frequently from sayings of Jesus, but he is more interested in His attack on the scribes and Pharisees¹⁴⁵ as representatives of the "teachers" of the Jews whose doctrine was unlightened, for they failed to see that the prophets witnessed to Christ. On the other hand Justin is much concerned to emphasise that the humanity which Jesus assumed was a real humanity.

¹⁴⁰Dial. 43, 63, 111, 114, 118. ¹⁴¹Ps. 22:16-18, cf. Dial. 97.

¹⁴²Dial. 63. ¹⁴³Dial. 106. ¹⁴⁴Dial. 125.

¹⁴⁵Dial. 17, 112.

At one point, however, he seems to have been unwilling to say, as Irenaeus would have said, that Jesus Christ fully assumed our humanity:

Christ derives blood not from the seed of man, but from the power of God. For as God, and not man, has produced the blood of the vine, so also (the scripture) has predicted that the blood of Christ would be not of the seed of man, but of the power of God. But this prophecy (i.e. Gen. 49:11), sirs, which I repeated, proves that Christ is not man of men, begotten in the ordinary course of humanity.¹⁴⁶

John 1:13 in context

Justin, however, does not seem to be saying more at this point than he repeats later in the Dialogue concerning Christ's birth of the Virgin. This "operation of the power and will of the Maker of all things" marks the element of discontinuity between Christ and men, "for if He also were to be begotten of sexual intercourse, like all other first-born sons, why did God say that He would give a sign which is not common to all the first-born sons?"¹⁴⁷

The humanity of Jesus, however, is a true humanity. Throughout Justin sees the element of continuity between Christ and men. Christ is capable of suffering. He submitted to be born a man of like passions with us, ὁμοπαθής, ¹⁴⁸ and His sufferings were real sufferings:

We may perceive that the Father wishes His Son really to undergo such sufferings for our sakes, and may not say that He, being the Son of God, did not feel what was happening to Him and inflicted upon Him.¹⁴⁹

The humanity which Jesus has assumed in the incarnation is our humanity, and in our humanity Jesus encounters Satan and defeats him. Man had fallen

¹⁴⁶Dial. 54. ¹⁴⁷Dial. 84.

¹⁴⁸Dial. 48. ¹⁴⁹Dial. 103.

through the temptation of the devil, and Christ was confronted in the wilderness by this same adversary of man.¹⁵⁰ The devil then sought to bring about the downfall of this man in the same way in which he brought Adam down, but in our humanity Christ defeats the temptation of Satan:

When He became man, as I previously remarked, the devil came to Him, i.e. that power which is called the serpent and Satan, tempting Him, and striving to effect His downfall by asking Him to worship him. But He destroyed and overthrew the devil, having proved him to be wicked, in that he asked to be worshipped as God.¹⁵¹

This aspect of the work of Christ as His rendering of obedience in our humanity is a common one in the Dialogue.¹⁵²

The cross and the destruction of the demons. It is, however, on the passion of Christ that Justin frequently dwells in the Dialogue. Quite clearly the sufferings of the Messianic servant in Isaiah 53 influenced Justin's conception of the passion of Christ, for he frequently expounds on this text.¹⁵³ The theology of the Dialogue is grounded in the belief that Jesus Christ had taken the curse of the cross for the sake of man: "Christ served, even to the slavery of the cross, for the various and many-formed races of mankind, acquiring them by the blood and mystery of the cross."¹⁵⁴ What in Justin, then, is the relation between the cross and Christ's destruction of the power of the serpent? Von Engelhardt states, "The cross receives little significance in Justin as marking the triumph of Christ over the demons."¹⁵⁵ But Justin is quite clear that the con-

¹⁵⁰Dial. 103. ¹⁵¹Dial. 103. ¹⁵²Dial. 100.

¹⁵³Dial. 26,76,90,91,111. ¹⁵⁴Dial. 134.

¹⁵⁵Moritz von Engelhardt, Das Christentum Justins des Märtyrers, (Erlangen: 1878), pp. 231-41.

nexion between the cross and man's redemption is to be seen in Christ's appropriation of our curse.

He discusses this point in detail in his exposition of the setting up by Moses of the brazen serpent in the wilderness. When those who were bitten by the serpents gazed at the sign set up by Moses, they were healed of their wounds. Mankind has been bitten by the fangs of the serpent: that is, they have been wounded by "wicked deeds, idolatries, and other unrighteous acts." The setting up of the brazen serpent is thus a sign of the mystery which God has proclaimed on the cross. Those who have shared in the transgression of Adam but who believe in the Crucified are delivered from the power of the serpent.¹⁵⁶ The whole human race lies under the curse of sin, for Moses had written, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law, to do them."¹⁵⁷ But Jesus Christ, through His death on the cross, has taken to Himself the curse of the whole of mankind:

If, then, the Father of all wished His Christ for the whole human family to take upon Him the curses of all, knowing that, after He had been crucified and was dead, He would raise Him up, why do you argue about Him, who submitted to suffer these things according to the Father's will, as if He were accursed, and do not rather bewail yourselves?

By His stripes the human race is healed of its wound of sin and death.

If, then, men repent of their sins, and acknowledge Christ to be their

¹⁵⁶Dial. 94. Cf. the prayer in The Acts of Thomas, "May the hostile spiritual powers not see me," and a prayer addressed to Christ as "Ruler of both worlds," i.e. spiritual and demonic. See Otto Pflsiederer, Primitive Christianity (New York: 1906-11), Vol. III, p. 201 and cf. Dial. 30.

¹⁵⁷Deut. 27:26.

Redeemer, they shall have remission of their sins.¹⁵⁸ Thus it is that by the blood of Christ men's sins are said to be washed away.¹⁵⁹

Redemption as deliverance from death.

It is at this point that we can see most clearly how Justin interprets the salvation which Christ has secured for men as deliverance from death. He is the Word of God who has become man for our sakes "so that, participating in our miseries, He might heal them, ὅπως καὶ τῶν παθῶν τῶν ἡμετέρων συμμέτοχος γενόμενος καὶ ἱάσιν ποιησῆται."¹⁶⁰ This understanding of the work of Christ in restoring our nature and redeeming man, and not just the soul of man, is evident in Justin, and notably in the Dialogue. We can best consider it from two aspects.

Christ's death in the Old Testament. On the one hand, Justin has no hesitation in affirming that Jesus truly took upon Himself our human flesh. We have already considered this aspect in some detail. The significance of this affirmation is that if the Word of God has been made flesh, then Christ has altered the state of our humanity. If Christ has been made man, then, since our flesh belongs to the Creator, He has obtained possession of men through His incarnation and sufferings. In the context of his exposi-

¹⁵⁸Dial. 95.

¹⁵⁹Dial. 13,17,24,40,41,43,44,54,89,94,111,137.

¹⁶⁰II Apol. 13.

tion of Jacob's service for the sake of Laban's daughter Justin makes the remarkable statement that Christ served, even to the slavery of the cross, for the various and many-formed races of mankind, "acquiring them by the blood and mystery of the cross."¹⁶¹ In this way Justin seems to be saying that the death of Christ was necessary to procure the remission of men's sins, and he seems likewise quite clearly to be interpreting this death in terms of the Messianic sufferer of Isaiah 53. Similarly, finding a type of the suffering and crucifixion of Christ in the blood of the Passover lamb which, sprinkled on the door posts and lintel, delivered the Israelites in Egypt, Justin comments: "And as the blood of the Passover saved those who were in Egypt, so also the blood of Christ will deliver from death those who have believed."¹⁶²

Justin finds further illustration of the meaning of the death of Christ in the Paschal type: even the manner in which the lamb was dressed (with one spit passing through the body from lower to upper parts, and one across the back) as a symbol of the suffering of the cross.¹⁶³ Now, however, the type has been fulfilled in Christ who has been "delivered over to death by God for the transgressions of the people."¹⁶⁴ But types of His passion are evident throughout the whole of the Old Testament. For example, as Noah was saved by the wood of his ark, along with his house-

¹⁶¹Dial. 134. ¹⁶²Dial. 111. ¹⁶³Dial. 40. ¹⁶⁴Dial. 63.

held, so Christ "being the first-born of every creature, became again the chief of another race regenerated by Himself through water, and faith, and wood, containing the mystery of the cross."¹⁶⁵ Justin, indeed, found the symbol of the cross everywhere - in masts, ploughs, tools, even on the human body. The cross is τὸ μέγιστον σύμβολον τῆς ἰσχύος καὶ ἀρχῆς αὐτοῦ.¹⁶⁶ The uplifting of Moses' hands to form a cross was a sign by which the Amalekites were defeated, "and he who prevailed, prevailed by the cross."¹⁶⁷ It was on the cross also that Christ exorcised the demons, and proved Himself to be "Lord of the demons."¹⁶⁸ And those who believe in this Lord Jesus, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have all demons and evil subjected to them.¹⁶⁹ In this way, therefore, Jesus Christ has broken the power of the serpent, by being crucified and set up, as the brazen serpent of Moses was set up, upon the wood.¹⁷⁰

Christ's death and our forgiveness. At this point we see how Justin has connected the death of Christ with our obtaining of forgiveness. Early in the Dialogue he argues that the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ is taught by Isaiah:

Isaiah did not send you a bath, there to wash away murder and other sins, which not even all the water of the sea were sufficient to purge; but, as might have been expected, this was that saving bath of the olden time which followed those who repented, and who no longer were purified by the blood of goats and of sheep, or by the ashes of an

¹⁶⁵Dial. 138. ¹⁶⁶I Apol. 55. ¹⁶⁷Dial. 90.

¹⁶⁸Dial. 85. ¹⁶⁹Dial. 76. ¹⁷⁰Dial. 94.

heifer, or by the offerings of fine flour, but by faith through the blood of Christ, and through His death, who died for this very reason.¹⁷¹

In this passage Justin goes on to quote at length from Isaiah 53, and the conclusion is obvious, that he is interpreting, as he does throughout the Dialogue, the death of Christ in historical and dramatic terms. It is the death of Christ which is the means of life for those who are held in bondage to sin and death. Because of what He has done, Christ has become the first-born of a new humanity. Justin, indeed, appears to anticipate in his teaching at this point the doctrine of recapitulation which, Pauline in origin, Irenaeus took from Justin¹⁷² and developed in detail. Thus he writes:

We have understood that He proceeded before all creatures from the Father by His power and will . . . and that He became man by the Virgin, in order that the disobedience which proceeded from the serpent might receive its destruction in the same manner in which it derived its origin. For Eve, who was a virgin and undefiled, having conceived the word of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death. By the Virgin Mary received faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced the good tidings to her And by her He has been born, to whom we have proved so many scriptures refer, and by whom God destroys both the serpent and those angels and men who are like him; but works deliverance from death to those who repent of their wickedness and believe upon Him.¹⁷³

Christ the originator of a new humanity. If, as we have seen, Justin interprets redemption as Christ's assumption of our frail humanity, and His obtaining the possession of men through His sufferings, there is a complementary aspect in his doctrine that is to be considered. Christ has taken our flesh. But redemption for us means our sharing in God's human--

¹⁷¹Dial. 13. ¹⁷²A.h. IV.v1.2. ¹⁷³Dial. 100.

ity. It is through our union with Christ that we become the "man" that He became in His incarnation. By His work in suffering and dying for man Christ has become "the chief of another race regenerated by Himself through water, and faith, and wood." The soteriological and sacramental significance of this statement is inescapable. Christ is the originator of a new humanity. Soteriologically Justin is interpreting redemption in terms of deliverance - again the dramatic motif is strong:

Though we lived in fornication and all kinds of filthy conversation, we have by the grace of our Jesus, according to His Father's will, stripped ourselves of all those filthy wickednesses with which we were imbued. And though the devil is ever at hand to resist us, and anxious to seduce all to himself, yet the Angel of God, i.e. the power of God sent to us through Jesus Christ, rebukes him, and he departs from us. And we are just as if drawn out from the fire, when purified from our former sins, and (rescued) from the affliction and the fiery trial by which the devil and all his coadjutors try us; out of which Jesus the Son of God has promised again to deliver us, and invested us with prepared garments, if we do His commandments; and has undertaken to provide an eternal kingdom for us.¹⁷⁴

Moreover, what Christ has delivered is our body, our flesh, our *σάρξ*.

Thus, though the writers of the second century are generally slow to relate the redemption of our humanity to the passion of Christ in our humanity, this element is not altogether lacking in Justin.

The new humanity sacramentally sealed. Sacramentally, however, we can see this connexion even more clearly. In baptism our bodies are baptised, i.e. the humanity which is marked by "bad habits and wicked training." It is interesting to note that in discussing baptism in the Apology Justin quotes Isaiah 1:16-20 as one of the scriptural bases for Christian

¹⁷⁴Dial. 116.

baptism. In baptism the old humanity, which is evil in its soul and sinful, is "made new through Christ." That is, the "old" is put to death, and the body is raised into new life in Christ. Baptism purifies those who have repented, and therefore is called "the water of life," because it does more than wash the body. It revives and recreates the old and fallen humanity: "What is the use of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and body alone? Baptize the soul from wrath, from envy, and from hatred; and, lo! the body is pure."¹⁷⁵ In all this, the connexion in Justin between the death of Christ for sin and the baptism of the believer is close. Jesus Christ died, and shed His blood, to win man. And the one who is baptised is baptised "in the name of Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate."¹⁷⁶

We see this again when Justin discusses the Eucharist. As in baptism it is our frail humanity that is the object of God's love, and is made new through Christ because in baptism we are in union with the saving humanity of Christ, so in the Eucharist we partake in the new humanity of Christ: "We have been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh."¹⁷⁷ And in receiving this new humanity of Christ as our own, we are delivered from the evil that marked our old nature.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵I Apol. 61; Dial. 14. ¹⁷⁶I Apol. 61.

¹⁷⁷I Apol. 66. ¹⁷⁸Dial. 41.

Immortality. Closely connected with this is Justin's doctrine of immortality. He has said,

(Jesus Christ) shall come from heaven with glory, accompanied by His angelic host, when also He shall raise the bodies of all men who have lived, and shall clothe those of the worthy with immortality, and shall send those of the wicked, endued with eternal sensibility, into everlasting fire with the wicked devils.¹⁷⁹

For Justin the whole man had fallen, and the whole man must be raised. There is little of the Platonic doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul in Justin. With Irenaeus, Justin says that man can live only as he lives in God, and if man lives it is because God continues to pour the gift of life upon him:

Now that the soul lives, no one would deny. But if it lives, it lives not as being life, but as the partaker of life Now the soul partakes of life, since God wills it to live. Thus, then, it will not even partake of life when God does not will it to live.¹⁸⁰

Although, however, Justin is anti-philosophical in his interpretation of the immortality, he tends to think of it as being a reward which is bestowed upon the man who through the redemption of Christ has recovered the true freedom of his reason: "Those who choose what is pleasing to Him are, on account of their choice, deemed worthy of incorruption and of fellowship with Him."¹⁸¹ But the incorruption is the new humanity which is given to those who have repented and believed that the crucified Saviour is their Lord and God. Upon those who believe in Him and trust in Him for their salvation, God continues to bestow the gift of life.

¹⁷⁹I Apol. 52. ¹⁸⁰Dial. 6. ¹⁸¹I Apol. 10.

CHAPTER VI

THE PASSION OF CHRIST AND THE DEATH OF THE MARTYR AS THE IMITATION OF HIS PASSION IN THE EPISTLES OF IGNATIUS AND POLYCARP AND IN THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP

I. THE GOSPEL IN THE AGE OF MARTYRDOM

In discussing the doctrine of the passion of Christ in the second century there are good reasons for connecting Ignatius and Polycarp. Both men were martyrs and both wrote their epistles at the same period. It can be safely assumed that the two had met. Ignatius wrote four of his epistles from Smyrna where Polycarp was bishop, and wrote a further epistle addressed to "Polycarp, who is the bishop of the Church of the Smyrnaeans." It is natural to include in our discussion the anonymous Martyrdom of Polycarp, our earliest extant account of the martyrdom of a Christian.

The Epistles of Ignatius and Polycarp are a heroic witness from a time of martyrdom. Ignatius, writing under duress, has given us "one of the finest expressions of Christianity of the second century."¹ Such praise has repeatedly been given to his epistles.² The situation of the

¹P. Batiffol, article "Ignatius" in Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, ed. J. Hastings (Edinburgh: 1918), p. 245.

²"Nothing in early Christian literature is at all like them; nothing else has the same intensely personal character," F. J. A. Hort, Six Lectures on the Ante-Nicene Fathers (London: 1895), p. 28; "Even St. Paul does not reveal himself more clearly in his writings," F. L. Cross, The Early Christian Fathers (London: 1960), p. 16.

writer is his present captivity and his impending martyrdom. From Syria to Rome he is bound to ten "leopards" (as he calls the company of soldiers who were taking him to Rome), and he has given himself up to death, fire, the sword, and wild beasts, but he has no fear, because "near the sword is near to God, with the wild beasts is with God."³ When, therefore, Ignatius takes refuge in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is because this Gospel tells him of a real Sufferer who endured a real passion.⁴ The anti-docetic polemical character of the epistles of Ignatius has often been discussed, and we shall examine it later in the present chapter, but we must recall that important as this is, Ignatius did not set out to compose an anti-docetic treatise. If he stressed the passion of Christ, he does not do so at the expense of the whole life of his Redeemer,⁵ but sums up the Gospel in these terms because he himself will shortly imitate Christ in his own sufferings.⁶

The polemical background. Having granted this, however, it is helpful to understand that Ignatius wrote his epistles against a background in

³Smyr. 4.2.

⁴H. J. Bardsley, "The testimony of Ignatius and Polycarp to the apostleship of St. John," in Journal of Theological Studies, hereafter cited as J.T.S., Vol. 14, p. 493.

⁵For Ignatius the Gospel is the message of "the birth and passion and resurrection which took place at the time of the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate," Magn. 11.1.

⁶"The martyr whose sufferings were real . . . felt strongly his need of a comfort more substantial than that provided by a docetic passion. He takes refuge in the Gospel because it tells him of a real passion," H. J. Bardsley, J.T.S., Vol. 14, p. 493.

which two hostile influences were in danger of subverting the Church, these being some form of Gnostic docetism and Judaism.

Docetism. The attitude of docetism is defined in a remark attributed to Justin Martyr: "There are some who declare that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh but only as spirit, and exhibited an appearance (φαντασίαν) of flesh."⁷ If for the docetists the humanity of Christ was unreal, His sufferings were also unreal. Although the term "docetists" is comparatively late,⁸ the question εἰ παθὴς ὁ Χριστός is as early as the kerygma of the New Testament, and had frequently been answered in the negative.⁹ The answer in the New Testament is always the same: τὸν Χριστὸν ἑδὲι παθεῖν καὶ ἀναστῆσαι ἐκ νεκρῶν.¹⁰ It is clear, however, from his epistles that Ignatius knew of the threat that a docetic interpretation of the death of Christ meant to the theology and daily life (which also involved martyrdom) of the young Church. The docetists would not admit that Christ was σαρκιφόρος. They "ignorantly deny Him," "make a practice of carrying about the Name with wicked guile," and vainly blaspheme His name.¹¹ Ignatius opposes the false teaching of the docetists by insisting

⁷De res. 2.

⁸Eusebius, H.E. 6.11,6 gives Serapion of Antioch (c. 200 A.D.) credit for having first used the term.

⁹Acts 26:23.

¹⁰Acts 17:3; cf. Luke 24:25,46; I Thess. 4:14.

¹¹Smyr. 5.2; Eph. 7.1; Trall. 8.2.

on the reality of the incarnation, passion, and resurrection:

Be deaf, therefore, when anyone speaks to you apart from Jesus Christ, who was of the family of David, and of Mary, who was truly born (ἀληθῶς ἐγεννήθη), both ate and drank, was truly persecuted (ἀληθῶς ἐδιώχθη) under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified (ἀληθῶς ἐσταυρώθη) and died in the sight of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth; who also was truly raised from the dead (ἀληθῶς ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ νεκρῶν) when His Father raised Him up.¹²

For the same reason Ignatius commends the faith of the Smyrnaeans who are, he observes,

established in immoveable faith, as if nailed to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . being fully persuaded as touching our Lord, that He is in truth of the family of David according to the flesh, God's Son by the will and power of God, truly born of a Virgin (γεγεννημένον ἀληθῶς ἐκ παρθένου), baptised by John that "all righteousness might be fulfilled by him," truly nailed to a tree in the flesh for our sakes (ἀληθῶς καθηλωμένον ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐν σαρκί) under Pontius Pilate.¹³

The danger of the docetic heresy for Ignatius was its divisiveness. Inevitably, since they could not confess that the Eucharist was "the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ who suffered for our sins,"¹⁴ the docetists separated themselves from the others, and this separation was impure and blasphemous: "He who is within the sanctuary is pure, but he who is without the sanctuary is not pure." It was a mark of constancy in the faith to be "inseparable from God, from Jesus Christ, and from the bishop and the ordinances of the apostles." We shall later discuss the matter of unity, but at the present we are content merely to state that for Ignatius the unity of the Church around the bishop is to be interpreted primarily in the light of the docetic question εἰ παθητός ὁ Χριστός. As we shall also see later Ignatius defines both unity and faith in terms of the passion of Jesus Christ - unity, because there was a real danger that Chris-

¹² Trall. 9.1,2. ¹³ Smyr. 1.1,2. ¹⁴ Smyr. 7.2.

tianity might become little more than a speculative philosophy, and faith, because the young Church was being brought "nailed to the cross" to its own martyrdom. Both in unity and in faith Ignatius finds Christ in His passion as the informing centre.¹⁵

Judaism. The danger of Judaizing the Gospel was for Ignatius what it had been for the Apostle Paul: "If we are living until now according to Judaism, we confess that we have not received grace."¹⁶ There was no possibility of a compromise with Judaism, for the acceptance of Judaism meant to receive what Ignatius calls the "ancient customs" of the Jews - a whole legalistic scheme and not a Gospel of grace. The heresy at Magnesia to which Ignatius refers was probably some form of Ebionism, a Judaizing Christianity which rejected the Virgin Birth, and held that Christ had come to the Jewish race. The Ebionites attempted to keep Christianity within Judaism, stressed adherence to Old Testament law, not least in regard to the Sabbath, and accused their fellow-Christians of ignoring the law concerning meats and circumcision.¹⁷ The Ebionites appear in some

¹⁵On submission to the bishop and the error of removing him see also Eph. 4.1, Smyr. 9.1.

¹⁶Magn. 8.2.

¹⁷On the Ebionite teaching see Eusebius, H.E. 3.27; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2.1, cf. 5.61, 65; *Περὶ ὁμοῦ* 4.3.8, *Hom. on Jer.* 19.12, *Hom. on Matt.* 11.12, *Hom. on Gen.* 3.4. See also E.de W. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, (Edinburgh: 1950 (repr.)), pp. liv.f., 104ff., 281-9; John Lawson, *A Theological and Historical Introduction to the Apostolic Fathers*, hereafter cited as *Introduction* (New York: 1961), pp. 121-3; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, pp. 139f.

degree to have a connexion with Gnostic theology. Ignatius refers to their narrow interpretation of scripture, observance of the Sabbath, and Belief that salvation is merited through works. His verdict on the heresy is forthright: "It is monstrous to talk of Jesus Christ and to practice Judaism."¹⁸ The danger which he saw in the Judaizing heresy produced the same result as the docetic heresy - division. His frequent appeals for unity - "do nothing in factiousness, but after the teaching of Christ" - are directed towards those who are being led astray^a by the Judaisers. Again we note that his exhortation to submit to the bishop and presbyters is not to be understood in the light of later interpretations of apostolic succession but rather as an expression in the local congregation of the unity which exists between the Lord and the Father.¹⁹

This, then, is the background against which Ignatius wrote his letters to the churches. Gnostic docetism and Judaism threatened the purity of the Church's doctrine of Christ, and Ignatius, who was nothing if not a pastor, was concerned to warn believers against these hostile influences. Let us recall, however, that Ignatius wrote not to unfold an anti-docetic or anti-Ebionite defence, but principally because in his captivity and coming death he can do^{no} other than take refuge in the Gospel of Christ which[^] tells him of a real sufferer into whose sufferings he himself enters. We

¹⁸Magn. 10.3; cf. also Phil. 8.2, Magn. 8,9,10.

¹⁹Cf. Magn. 7.1.

must now, therefore, without further ado move on to discuss first, the Person and Work of Christ in Ignatius and Polycarp, and then the death of the martyr as the imitation of Christ's passion.²⁰

II. THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST IN IGNATIUS AND POLYCARP

The Person of Christ and Redemption through the Incarnate.

Of the person of Christ neither Ignatius nor Polycarp has a great deal to say. The theology of Ignatius is "a refutation of docetism,"²¹ hastily composed by a man whose sufferings have already begun and whose death is not far off. His interest as well as his theology centres upon the incarnate humanity, and above all the passion, of his Lord.

The humanity of Christ. The desire to refute Gnosticism and to find in the passion of Christ his inspiration to constancy led Ignatius to stress the humanity and passibility of his Saviour. He has very little to say about, and apparently little interest in, discussing the pre-existence of Christ, other than when he comments, almost casually, on Jesus Christ "who was from eternity with the Father and was made manifest at the end of

²⁰On Ignatius's relationship to the Gnostics see H. Schlier, Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den Ignatiusbriefen, Beihefte zur T.W.N.T., Vol. VIII, (Giessen: 1929). On Mandaean parallels and teaching see Virginia Corwin, St. Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch (New Haven: 1960), pp. 175-85; Baltmann, Theology of the New Testament (London: 1952), Vol. I, pp. 179f., and also H. Lietzmann, Geschichte der Alten Kirche (Berlin and Leipzig: 1936), E. T. The Beginnings of the Christian Church (London: 193-); W. Bauer, Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum, (Tübingen: 1934).

²¹p. Batiffel, "Ignatius," Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, edited by James Hastings (New York: 1916-9), Vol. II, p. 601.

time" (ὅς πρὸ αἰώνων παρὰ πατρὶ ᾗν καὶ ἐν τέλει ἐφάνη).²² For Ignatius Christ is "both flesh and spirit, σαρκινός τε καὶ πνευματικός "23 both divine and human,

who is above seasons, timeless, invisible, who for our sakes became visible, who cannot be touched, who cannot suffer, who for our sakes accepted suffering, who in every way endured for our sakes, (τὸν ὑπὲρ καιρὸν, τὸν ἄχρονον, τὸν ἀόρατον, τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς ὁρατὸν, τὸν ἀφῆλᾶφτον, τὸν ἀπαθῆν, τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς παθητὸν, τὸν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον δι' ἡμᾶς ὑπομείναντα).²⁴

We have here an illustration of a common affirmation in the Apostolic Fathers, the apparent paradox that Christ truly suffered and yet was divine.²⁵

Christ as the revelation of God. In a variety of ways Ignatius affirms the divinity of Jesus Christ. Only once, for example, does he refer to the Father as ὁ θεός ²⁶ but eight times he uses this title of the Son.²⁷ Similarly, he uses the title θεός more frequently of the Son than of the Father.²⁸ It is through this Son that the Father has manifested Himself. Christ came forth from the Father.²⁹ He is the High Priest to whom the secret things of God have been entrusted, and the door of the Father

²²Magn. 6.1. ²³Eph. 7.2. ²⁴Poly. 3.2.

²⁵"Far from concealing, Ignatius rather glories in the paradoxes and antitheses of Christ's being; they are cardinal to the salvation he brings," H. R. Mackintosh, The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ (Edinburgh: 1912), p. 130f., and also p. 131 footnote 1.

²⁶Eph. 2.

²⁷Eph. inser., 18.2, Rom. inser. (bis), 3.3, 6.3, Eph. 5.2, Smyr. 1.1.

²⁸See Corwin, St. Ignatius, pp. 130-2. ²⁹Magn. 7.2.

(θύρα τοῦ πατρὸς), through which the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Church enter to God.³⁰ He is the "will" or "mind" of the Father in harmony with whom men are to run their course.³¹ He is the Logos who proceeds from the silence (λόγος ἀπὸ σιγῆς προελθὼν).³² Though Ignatius uses the technical term so frequently applied by Justin to Christ, he does not use it in the same sense, but simply states that in Christ God, who otherwise is unknowable, becomes known to us - He is θεὸς ἀνθρωπίνως φανερούμενος .³³ God's Word, that is to say, assumes in Jesus Christ a form that is knowable by us, in Barth's phrase, "such that He can become cognisable by us by analogy with other forms known to us."³⁴

The incarnation. In the incarnation we see "God in man, ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ θεός, ³⁵ and our God, Jesus the Christ, "was conceived by Mary, by the dispensation of God, 'as well of the seed of David' as of the Holy Spirit.³⁶ When Ignatius speaks of the Virgin Birth, he is concerned only to stress, as Irenaeus and other writers of the second century were concerned, that Christ is vere homo. But in the incarnation is the beginning of a new dispensation, (οἰκονομία), initiated by the new man, Jesus Christ, in which all things are disturbed, because the abolition of death (θανάτου κατάλυσις) was being planned. Ignatius holds together both the

³⁰Phil. 9.1. ³¹Eph. 3.2. ³²Magn. 8.2. ³³Eph. 19.3.

³⁴K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. I, PT. II, p. 36.

³⁵Eph. 7.2. ³⁶Eph. 18.2.

incarnation and the death of Christ in his view of the atonement, though his own situation led him to stress the cross rather than the cradle.³⁷ We find in the Epistle of Barnabas the same note of the condescension of God's Son to our frail human comprehension:

For if He had not come in the flesh men could in no way have been saved by beholding Him; seeing that they have not the power when they look at the sun to gaze straight at its rays, though it is destined to perish, and is the work of His hands. So then the Son of God came in the flesh for this reason, that He might complete the total of the sins of those who persecuted His prophets to death.³⁸

Ignatius similarly speaks of the work of Christ as bringing men a knowledge of God (θεοῦ γνῶσιν), because He Himself is the Logos of God, the only Teacher of men, and the One whose words are of value, for they are the means by which man may be perfect, ἵνα τέλειος ᾖ. Jesus is the Logos of God, "the mouth which cannot lie, by which the Father has spoken truly." He is the "knowledge of God," θεοῦ γνῶσις, by whom we are preserved from perishing in folly, but it is His death which has brought us this salvation and eternal life.³⁹ To this extent the ontological interpretation of the redemption of Christ is not wholly absent from the theology of Ignatius, though it is not strong. Nor does Ignatius have any strong sense of the radical corruption of sin. While sin means man's separation from God, this separation is not so much as an offence or burden as a misfortune, and indeed in all his epistles he mentions sin only twice.⁴⁰ Even Polycarp,

³⁷Cf. Eph. 18.2, and see also K. Barth, op. cit., p. 147; Wingren, Man and the Incarnation, pp. 96ff. See the significant passage in Eph. 19, 20, and the commentary on it in J. B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers, (New York: 1889-90), PT. II, Vol. II, p. 82ff. Cf. too I Cor. 2.7, Tertullian, adv. M. 5.6, Origen, Comm. on Ps. 34:8.

³⁸Ep. of Barn. 5.10. ³⁹Eph. 15.2, Rom. 8.2, Eph. 18.2, 18.1.

⁴⁰Eph. 14.2, Smyrn. 7.1.

though he admits that "we all owe the debt of sin,"⁴¹ appears to be quoting rather than offering an interpretation of the human predicament, and neither he nor Ignatius offer any theory of the origin of sin, though Barnabas appears to allude to it.⁴²

The Work of Christ and Redemption through His Death.

Unlike other writers in the second century, however, the immediate occasion of the writing of these epistles was not the necessity of offering a dogmatic statement concerning man and the act of Christ in ransoming him, but rather the prospect of martyrdom. Even, therefore, though we find little in Ignatius and Polycarp about sin in itself, the death of Christ for sin is a frequent theme, now in addition related to the death of the martyr. Their interest, that is, is not so much in the person as in the work of Christ, not so much in the ontological interpretation of redemption as in the dramatic.

The cross. We can hardly read a chapter of Ignatius without seeing how the cross and passion of Christ preoccupied his mind. All that he writes turns on this centre, the life, death, and passion of Christ.⁴³

⁴¹Polycarp, Phil. 6.1.

⁴²Ep. of Barn. 12.5, though cf. 6.11, where he suggests that children's souls are sinless.

⁴³Cf. C. T. Cruttwell, A Literary History of Early Christianity (London: 1893), p. 85.

Unlike Paul he makes frequent use of πάθος and πάσχειν to describe the sufferings of Christ.⁴⁴ Interestingly enough, however, Polycarp shows little desire to stress the reality of the incarnation and passion, only once refers to the blood of Christ as a crime which God, the judge of the living and of the dead, will avenge on those who disobey Him,⁴⁵ and twice to the cross, once in a conventional phrase and once in a quotation.⁴⁶ To Ignatius, on the other hand, the death on the cross was not merely as assumption on which he could proceed without further explicit reference to it, but was "the final and incontrovertible proof that Christ truly became man."⁴⁷ The cross is the "ensign for all ages" (σύσσημον εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας),⁴⁸ the incontrovertible demonstration that Christ has really borne our flesh. The cross is the sign that God has not surrendered the world, but has taken responsibility for its redemption, even at the cost of suffering.⁴⁹

The reality of the passion. The polemical background of the epis-

⁴⁴See e.g., Eph. 18; Rom. 4-6; Phil. 3; Smyr. 2,4,6.

⁴⁵Polycarp, Phil. 2.1. ⁴⁶Polycarp, Phil. 7.1; 12.3.

⁴⁷Corwin, St. Ignatius, p. 170

⁴⁸Smyr. 1.2. On the translation of αἰῶνες see Corwin, op. cit., p. 178 and n.

⁴⁹When he speaks of αἷμα θεοῦ (Eph. 1.1) and τὸ πάθος τοῦ θεοῦ (Rom. 6.30), Ignatius seems to be speaking as a patripassionist. As we have seen, however, he uses the titles θεός and ὁ θεός more frequently of the Son than of the Father. And yet the startling conjunction of words also may have been intended to stress the cost of our redemption to the Father.

ties, as we have seen, was the denial by the Docetists and Gnostics, though for different reasons, that Christ was capable of suffering. The Docetists maintained that if Christ suffered, His sufferings could not have been real. They claimed "His suffering was only a semblance" (λέγουσι, τὸ δοκεῖν πεπονθέναι αὐτόν).⁵⁰ The Judaisers on the other hand maintained that if Christ suffered, He was not really Christ. Ignatius warns against the snare of their vain doctrine which denied the birth, passion, and resurrection, and vigorously affirms that "these things were truly and certainly done by Jesus Christ."⁵¹ Throughout his writings we consequently find great stress laid on the reality of the passion.⁵² He was truly born, truly persecuted, truly crucified, and truly raised, and though His cross was an offence to unbelievers and His death denied by the Jews, yet to those who believe it is salvation, eternal life, and the mystery through which we receive faith.⁵³ In a curious phrase Ignatius makes a significant comment on the cross and the relationship of the work of Christ the Son to the Father and the Spirit when he says, "You are as stones of the temple of the Father, made ready for the building of God our Father, carried up to the heights by the engine of Jesus Christ (διὰ τῆς μηχανῆς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), that is the cross, and using as a rope the Holy Spirit."⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Trall. 10.1, cf. Smyr. 2. ⁵¹ Magn. 11, cf. Phil. 8.2, 9.2.

⁵² Trall. 9, cf. Smyr. 1,2,3.

⁵³ Eph. 18.1; Magn. 9.1; Phil. 3; Smyr. 1,5,6. ⁵⁴ Eph. 9.1.

The significance of the cross. Granting, then, that for Ignatius the cross is the central fact of the Gospel, what interpretation does he put upon it? What is the significance of the cross for faith? Both Barnabas and Justin repeatedly if not monotonously find symbols of the cross in the phenomena of nature, daily life, and the Old Testament, pressing them into the service of an almost mechanical staurology. Ignatius does not look for symbols, but his writings abound in references to the actual passion of Christ. Our interest in him increases in proportion as we find the cross interpreted. What does he have to say about the meaning of Christ's passion "for us"? That Christ did indeed die for us is quite clear to Ignatius. He died "for our sake" (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν). He was "nailed to a tree in the flesh for our sakes" (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν).⁵⁵ He "suffered all these things for us" (δι' ἡμᾶς), that we might attain salvation."⁵⁶ Polycarp shares his views: Christ died on our behalf (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν), as He was raised by God for our sakes (δι' ἡμᾶς).⁵⁷ And when Ignatius and Polycarp talk of "us," it is the Jews and Gentiles, all nations and tongues who are declared to be recipients of the divine blessing.⁵⁸

Christ's death for sin. But Ignatius and Polycarp are unwilling to leave the statement "Christ died for us" unqualified. Christ "endured for

⁵⁵Rom. 6.1; Smyr. 1.2. ⁵⁶Smyr. 2.1. ⁵⁷Polycarp, Phil. 9.2.

⁵⁸Smyr. 1; Magn. 10.

our sins," says Polycarp, "even to the suffering of death, ὑπέμεινεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἕως θανάτου."⁵⁹ He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree, who did no sin."⁶⁰ The Martyrdom of Polycarp has little to say about the death of Christ, and its interpretation of that death is orthodox: "Christ . . . suffered for the salvation of those who are being saved in the whole world, the innocent for sinners."⁶¹ For Ignatius the truth of the Gospel is demonstrated in the Eucharist which is, he affirms, "the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ which suffered for our sins" (ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν παθοῦσαν).⁶² Elsewhere, however, he has an interesting interpretation of the death of the Saviour where he says that the false teachers at Ephesus will suffer death "if a man corrupt by false teaching the faith of God for the sake of which Jesus Christ was crucified (πίστιν θεοῦ . . . ὑπὲρ ἧς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐσταυρώθη)."⁶³ Does "faith" here mean "the body of orthodox doctrine," as Lawson suggests,⁶⁴ and therefore something different from the term as used earlier in the same Epistle? In the New Testament πίστις appears to bear this meaning at times, e.g. when Jude 3 speaks of "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints."⁶⁵ It may be possible to interpret this passage in Ignatius to mean

⁵⁹Polycarp, Phil. 1.2. ⁶⁰Polycarp, Phil. 8.1.

⁶¹Martyrdom of Polycarp 17.2. ⁶²Smyr. 7.1. ⁶³Eph. 16.2.

⁶⁴Lawson, Introduction, p. 114.

⁶⁵See Richardson, Introduction, p. 114, though it is questionable if πίστις in Gal. 1:23 is to be understood in this sense; cf. Burton, Epistle to the Galatians, p. 64.

that Jesus Christ died "for the faith," in the later sense of that phrase. The more natural interpretation, however, is that πίστιν θεοῦ is to be understood, particularly in the light of the polemical context in which Ignatius warns against the false teaching of the Judaisers, to mean "faith in God" as opposed to the "ancient customs" and "works" of the Judaising Christians. It is then quite simple for Ignatius to say that this Gospel of grace can be corrupted, and that Jesus Christ was crucified for it. That is to say, in order to free men to a new hope from the bondage of the law, Jesus Christ has been crucified. Here is an interpretation of the death of Christ which is to be laid beside the doctrine that Christ died "for sin."

Christ's death as a sacrifice. Though he speaks frequently of the death of Christ for sin, Ignatius does not explicitly refer to this death as a sacrifice in the terms used, for example, by Barnabas when he refers to Christ's death as "a sacrifice for our sins," ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἁμαρτιῶν θυσίαν.⁶⁶ It has been suggested, a little too confidently, perhaps, that Ignatius has some doctrine of the death of Christ as a sacrifice, but it does not seem that the point has been proved. Corwin, for example, maintains that the use in Ignatius of the word θυσιαστήριον, altar,⁶⁷ suggests that the notion of sacrifice was embedded in the liturgy that the martyr knew, and that this makes it difficult to avoid conviction that he thought of the death as a sacrifice.⁶⁸ Professor Corwin makes the

⁶⁶Ep. of Barn. 7.2. ⁶⁷Eph. 5.2; Trall. 7.2.

⁶⁸Corwin, St. Ignatius, p. 172.

further point that since Ignatius speaks of his own death in writing to the Romans in sacrificial terms, it is hard to conceive that the death of Christ was less a sacrifice than his own.⁶⁹

In relation to the first matter we vigorously disagree with Corwin's definition of *θυσιαστήριον* as "the part of the church containing the altar, or perhaps the whole meeting room."⁷⁰ Ignatius in fact says this: "He who is within the sanctuary (*ὁ ἐντὸς θυσιαστηρίου ὢν*) is pure, but he who is without the sanctuary is not pure."⁷¹ It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Corwin has read into this passage later sacrificial ideas, and it is our interpretation that *θυσιαστήριον* is to be taken here metaphorically to mean "the Christian congregation gathered for Eucharistic worship under the presidency of the bishop and his fellow ministers." This argument is reinforced in the following chapter where Ignatius speaks of "faith, which is the flesh of the Lord," and "love, which is the blood of Jesus Christ." As we shall see in fuller detail later, faith and love are for Ignatius the substance of the Christian life; they have been secured by Christ and are realized in the sacramental life of the fellowship.⁷² Since Ignatius, unlike later writers, never speaks of the Eucharist in sacrificial terms, we cannot hold that he thinks of the death of Christ as a sacrifice, though he clearly thinks of it as of redemptive significance.

⁶⁹Rom. 2.2. ⁷⁰Corwin, St. Ignatius, p. 172 n.

⁷¹Trall. 7.2. ⁷²Cf. Rom. 7.3.

We can probably say little more than that in some fashion which is not explicitly defined the death of Christ for the redemption of mankind is commemorated in the Eucharist.⁷³

Christ's death as the means of life. What more does Ignatius say about the death of Christ and the redemption of man? Above all it is the means of our life: "The passion is our resurrection."⁷⁴ Ignatius compares the cross of Christ to a tree of life (perhaps with reference to the tree of Genesis 2) which bears as fruit those who have been saved by His passion: "Of its fruit (sc. the tree, or cross) are we from His divinely blessed passion."⁷⁵ The cross is a sign that God has mightily intervened in man's dilemma for his salvation (although "salvation" is a comparatively rare word in the Epistles), and the death of Christ is "the very centre of of his religious thinking."⁷⁶ Again and again Ignatius repeats his testi-

⁷³See "An approach to Ignatius," by James Moffatt, Harvard Theological Review, Vol. XXIX (1936), p. 9. The problem of interpretation is acute at this point. Does Ignatius teach a doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice? Modern Roman Catholic commentators read later doctrines of the mass into much that the early Fathers say. Athenagoras (Embassy 13) is the first to talk of the "bloodless sacrifice," ἀναιμάρτος θυσία and Apollonius, martyred 185, says that all Christians "offer a bloodless sacrifice to God." (See Acts 8 in F. C. Conybeare, The Armenian Apology and Acts of Apollonius and Other Monuments of Early Christianity; Grehan, in common with other modern Roman Catholics, insists, "This can hardly escape being taken as a reference to the Eucharist." See Ancient Christian Writers, No. 23, translated and annotated by J. H. Grehan (London: 1956), p. 122, and cf. P. Batiffol, L'Eucharistie, La présence réelle et la transsubstantiation (Paris: 1930), pp. 39-50.

⁷⁴Smyr. 5.3. ⁷⁵Smyr. 1.2, cf. Trall. 11.2.

⁷⁶C. C. Richardson, The Christianity of Ignatius of Antioch (New York: 1935), p. 74.

mony: "Our life sprang up through Him and His death."⁷⁷

The cross is the means of life for the believer in Christ because it is the sign of Christ's triumph over death. By His death we escape our death.⁷⁸ Ignatius is not so explicit as Barnabas in this respect. This writer, however, is more consciously aware and explicit in his expression of the nature of man's sin and of Christ's redemption. Man is "paid over to death," "given over to the iniquity of error," and lost in darkness. But Christ has redeemed our hearts from darkness and our minds from error.⁷⁹

Sin and forgiveness. In Ignatius, on the other hand, the idea of the radical sinfulness and corruption of man is not strongly emphasised. He could not have written as Paul had: "God gave them up unto a reprobate mind." Nor does he conceive of $\sigma\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ and $\piνε\acute{\upsilon}\mu\alpha$ as being contradictory modes of existence or at least in active hostility against one another. In this regard too he is quite unlike Irenaeus, for whom man's life is the sphere of the conflict between flesh and spirit, between Satan and God, a conflict in which the issue is certain since Christ has been raised from the dead, but which will not cease for man until the consummation.⁸⁰ For Ignatius, however, man consists of flesh and spirit⁸¹ and the two are not

⁷⁷Magn. 9.1. ⁷⁸Trall. 2.1. ⁷⁹Ep. of Barn. 14.5-9.

⁸⁰In the New Testament see Gal. 5:16-23; Rom. 8:3-14; in Irenaeus A.h. V.x-xi.

⁸¹Poly. 2.2.

regarded as opposing principles: "But even what you do according to the flesh is spiritual, for you do all things in Jesus Christ."⁸² The idea, therefore, of the forgiveness of sins is correspondingly weak in Ignatius, and we look to him in vain to find the dominant motif of the Apostle Paul that sinful man has been accepted by God through Christ and has been justified through faith.

Sin as division. Only once⁸³ does Ignatius refer to the death of Christ for sin, though he does assert that it is necessary for the Christian to die to sin and in this way reproduce Christ's own passion: "Unless we willingly choose to die through Him in His passion, His life is not in us."⁸⁴ It is in this sense that the passion can be said to be our resurrection.⁸⁵ But though the idea of sin as radical corruption is absent from this writer, we find that he prefers to define that which is sinful in man as a tendency towards division, prompted by the devil. The Judaizing heretics have been led astray by "the wicked arts and snares of the prince of this world," and the Church in Philadelphia is warned lest these wicked arts should let them grow weak in love and fall into division. There are "specious wolves" in the flock at Philadelphia who are trying to bring believers into bondage, and the pastor who writes to them is concerned to warn against this division. The warning which he gives to the Church at

⁸²Eph. 8.2. ⁸³Smyr. 7.1. ⁸⁴Magn. 5.5, cf. Trall. 9.2.

⁸⁵Smyr. 5.3.

Ephesus is similar, for the prince of the world is attempting to pull them away from the life which they have received from Christ.⁸⁶

For the martyr who knows that he will soon face death in Rome (his own "passion") it is a pressing temptation to seek to escape the horrible end which awaits him: "The prince of this world wishes to tear me in pieces, and to corrupt my mind towards God."⁸⁷ Immediately he asks the Romans not to "help" the prince of the world, i.e. by attempting to dissuade him from his martyrdom. Here we begin to see the profound connexion which is made in these Epistles between the martyrdom of Christ and the martyrdom of the Christian. Ignatius is not to be deflected from the death that awaits him for that death is his imitatio Christi. Christ Himself did not escape suffering and death, for through His death the power of the devil was broken. The motif of conflict and victory is as pronounced at this point as it is, though in a much vaster way, in Irenaeus. There is a pattern of conflict and victory which marks both Christ and the Christian.

For Christ the conflict was His sufferings at Calvary. For the martyr the conflict is the evil treatment of the prince of this world and the tortures which crush his body, but as the sufferings of Christ were necessary for the removal of man's ignorance and the abolition of death, so the sufferings of the martyr are necessary "in order that I may attain to Jesus Christ" (ἵνα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπιτύχω).⁸⁸ For Christ, however, the sufferings were crowned by the resurrection. He was truly raised from the

⁸⁶Phil. 6.1, 2.1; Eph. 17.1. ⁸⁷Rom. 7.1. ⁸⁸Rom. 5.3.

dead when His Father raised Him up.⁸⁹ In a similar way the unity of those who are Christ's, i.e. their avoidance of the sinful impulse to division, is the means by which the power of the prince of this world is destroyed:

Seek, then, to come together more frequently to give thanks and glory to God. For when you gather together frequently the powers of Satan are destroyed (καθαίρουνται αἱ δυνάμεις τοῦ Σατανᾶ), and his mischief is brought to nothing by the concord of your faith.⁹⁰

The reference is almost certainly⁹¹ to the eucharistic worship of the Church, in which the death of Christ is commemorated, this same Eucharist which is later declared to be "the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ which suffered for our sins,"⁹² the only explicit reference, as we have seen, to Christ's death for sin. But there is a real connexion between the death of Christ the proto-martyr by which sin is atoned for, death abolished, and the old kingdom ruled by the prince of this world destroyed, and the unity of the Church in its sacramental life. As the Church shares in the eucharist, partaking in the true flesh and blood of the Lord, so also it participates in the passion of Christ. "Within the sanctuary" the union of the Christian with Christ is seen in the eucharistic meal which can thus be described as "an antidote against death" and "the medicine of immortality" φάρμακον ἀθανασίας, ἀντίδοτος τοῦ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν.⁹³ In the world the union of the Christian with Christ is seen par excellence in his mar-

⁸⁹Trall. 9.2, cf. Phil. 8.2. ⁹⁰Eph. 13.1.

⁹¹The phrase is εἰς εὐχαριστίαν. See Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Vol. I, p. 109; Lawson, Introduction, p. 113.

⁹²Smyr. 7.1. ⁹³Eph. 20.2.

tyrdom. Thus the martyr prays: "Suffer me to follow the example of the passion of my God."⁹⁴ As later we shall see in regard to faith, so here in regard to unity the passion of Christ is the centre of Ignatius's thinking.

Unity as an Expression of Redemption.

Polycarp's verdict on the Epistles of Ignatius which he sends in his covering note to the Church at Philippi is that they contain "faith, patience, and all the edification which pertains to our Lord."⁹⁵ The faith of which we read in Ignatius is warm, intimate, and personal. Harnack's conclusion, though perhaps overstated, is indicative of this warmth:

When the Apostolic Fathers reflect on faith, which is only incidentally, they mean that they believe an aggregate of sacred traditions and obey them, hoping that the comforting content of these traditions will be fully revealed in the future. But Ignatius speaks like a Christian who knows what he possesses in faith in Christ, i.e. confidence in Him.⁹⁶

The person of Christ, particularly Christ in His passion, is the constant thought of the martyr. Even his appeals for unity through obedience to the bishop and presbyters are informed by a warm, evangelical spirit: "Do nothing without the bishop and presbyters . . . but let there be in common one prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope in love, in the joy which is without fault, that is Jesus Christ, than whom there is nothing better."⁹⁷

⁹⁴Rom. 6.3. ⁹⁵Polycarp, Phil. 13.2.

⁹⁶Harnack, History of Dogma, Vol. I, p. 191f.

⁹⁷Magn. 7.1.

Unity grounded in the Being of God. This unanimity of the Christians has a double basis. On the one hand it has as its ground and inspiration the unity which exists between the Father and the Son: "Be subject to the bishop and to one another, even as Jesus Christ was subject to the Father."⁹⁸ "As many as belong to God and Jesus Christ - these are with the bishop. And as many as repent and come to the unity of the Church - these also shall be of God." Hence the writer can exhort the Ephesians, "Live in harmony with the will of God. For Jesus Christ, our inseparable life, is the will of the Father, even as the bishops, who have been appointed throughout the world, are by the will of Jesus Christ."⁹⁹ The *ὁμόνοια* which is found in God is to be reflected in the concord and unity of faith of the believers. Ignatius borrows numbers of metaphors to describe this unity from music, building, planting, and the human body. For him, as for the other Fathers of the second century, unity was neither optional nor speculative but the essential expression of the Church.¹⁰⁰

Unity grounded in the passion of Christ. On the other hand the unanimity of Christians flows from and reflects the passion of Christ. Thus, in the context of his warning against schismatic teaching Ignatius can say: "Be not deceived, my brethren, if any one follow a maker of schism he does not inherit the kingdom of God; if any man walk in strange doctrine he has

⁹⁸Magn. 13.1. ⁹⁹Phil. 3.2; Eph. 3.2.

¹⁰⁰Eph. 4.1, 9.1; Trall. 11.1; Eph. 4.2; and cf. C. C. Richardson in Journal of Religion, Vol. XVII (1937), pp. 428ff.

no part in the passion."¹⁰¹ The appeal for unity in the Eucharist ("be careful to use one Eucharist") is given immediately after this, and the reason for this sacramental unity clearly denotes the significance for unity which Ignatius attached to the passion of Christ - "for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup for union with His blood, one altar (θυσιαστήριον), as there is one bishop with the presbytery and the deacons my fellow servants."¹⁰²

Union with Christ in His passion. The union of the believer with Christ in His passion is further and notably illustrated in a brief remark in the Epistle to the Ephesians, though the translation is somewhat doubtful. Ignatius writes,

For our God, Jesus the Christ, was conceived by Mary by the dispensation of God, "as well of the seed of David" as of the Holy Spirit: He was born, and was baptized, that τῷ πάθει He might purify the water.¹⁰³

The question at issue is the meaning of τῷ πάθει . Does this mean "by experiencing it," i.e. "by Himself submitting" to baptism?¹⁰⁴ Or does it mean that Christ was baptized "that by His passion He might cleanse

¹⁰¹Phil. 3.3.

¹⁰²Phil. 4, cf. Phil. 8.2. On the translation of θυσιαστήριον see James Moffatt, H.T.R., Vol. XXIX, (1939), p. 9.

¹⁰³Eph. 18.2.

¹⁰⁴So Corwin, St. Ignatius, p. 100; K. Lake, Apostolic Fathers (New York: 1912-13), Vol. I, loc.cit.

water"?¹⁰⁵ Our own preference is for the latter translation, for *πάθος* is the characteristic term in Ignatius for the sufferings of Christ, and is not used elsewhere in the other sense of "experience." If this is what Ignatius is saying it is of much interest to us.

On the one hand he is then saying what the Evangelists are saying about the baptism of Jesus, that it was His acceptance of the vocation of the Suffering Servant who accepts John's baptism of repentance unto remission of sins because the Lord has laid on this Servant "the iniquity of us all."

Baptism and the Death of Christ.

Baptism into the death of Christ. The profound connexion between the baptism of Jesus and His crucifixion which is characteristic of the Gospel narrative is expressed in a lucid phrase of a modern New Testament theologian: "As the Representative Man He bears the sins of the world to the baptism of repentance, as later He would bear them to the baptism of the cross."¹⁰⁶ The passion is the "baptism" that Christ has to be baptized with. There is a similar profound connexion made by Paul between our baptism and the death of Jesus. There is not merely an analogy between what happens to us in baptism and what happened to Christ in His passion, ac-

¹⁰⁵So Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, PT. II, Vol. II, p. 74ff.; Lawson, Introduction, p. 116; Walter Bauer, Die Briefe des Ignatius (Tübingen: 1920).

¹⁰⁶Richardson, Introduction, p. 180.

according to the Apostle, but an actual identification: "We have become united with Him by the likeness of His death, σύμφωνα γεγονάμεν τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ."¹⁰⁷ In this passage the word ὁμοίωμα is a striking one. Elsewhere in the writings of Paul it refers to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, His actual embodiment in our frail human flesh, "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh," in order to redeem it as man. In the present passage from Romans the word is clearly used as a synonym for baptism, and therefore it is by baptism that we become united with Him in His death. That is to say there is an immediate and profound connexion between Christ's one baptism for all, i.e. His redemptive death, anticipated in His baptism in the Jordan, and our own baptism into Christ, which is our union with Him in His death.¹⁰⁸

If it is in this sense that we are to read τῷ πάθει in Ignatius's Epistle, then Paul's characteristic interpretation of baptism as our death to sin and crucifixion of the old nature in the one baptism of Jesus may also be said to have a place in our present writer.¹⁰⁹ Elsewhere Ignatius closely connects the baptism and crucifixion of Jesus Christ when he affirms that He was "baptised by John that 'all righteousness might be fulfilled by Him,' truly nailed to a tree in the flesh for our sakes."¹¹⁰ In His crucifixion "for our sakes" Jesus put away the body of our flesh and

¹⁰⁷Rom. 6:5.

¹⁰⁸See Interim Report of the Special Commission on Baptism presented to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, May 1955, pp. 36-40.

¹⁰⁹Cf. in the New Testament especially Col. 2:11f. ¹¹⁰Smyr. 1.1,2.

put to death our old nature, and in our baptism this seal of the putting away of our flesh marks our initiation into the holy People of God.

It may also be that we are to read an earlier passage in the Ephesians in this light where Ignatius says: "For this end did the Lord receive ointment on His head that He might breathe immortality on the Church."¹¹¹ In the Old Testament oil was used to consecrate kings, prophets, or priests,¹¹² and of course the word mashiah itself means "anointed." The point is, however, that both in His crucifixion and in His receiving ointment on His head Christ is doing what He does "for our sakes." Not only our death to sin but our gaining of immortality have been secured for us through the saving humanity of the Redeemer.

It may be that this interpretation of baptism as the renewal of our nature through the death of the One who was "God manifest as man for the 'newness' of eternal life"¹¹³ is referred to in the Epistle to Polycarp when Ignatius bids his reader "Let your baptism remain as your arms," i.e. let the newness which we have obtained through Christ be our defence against falling into "ancient customs" of the Judaizing heresy and the old nature. Barnabas is more explicit than Ignatius in connecting the one baptism of Christ and our baptism into Him: "Mark how he (sc. the writer

¹¹¹Eph. 17.1.

¹¹²Judges 9:8; I Sam. 16:3, 12f.; I Kings 1:34, 39, 19:16; Isa. 61:1; Exod. 28:41, 29:7, 29, 36, 30:30, etc.

¹¹³Eph. 19.

of Psalm 1) described the water and the cross together. For he means this: blessed are those who hoped on the cross, and descended into the water."

The writer goes on to quote "another prophet" (Ezekiel) who said,

"And there was a river flowing on the right hand, and beautiful trees grew out of it, and whosoever shall eat of them shall live for ever." He means to say that we go down into the water full of sins and foulness, and we come up bearing the fruit of fear in our hearts, and having hope on Jesus in the Spirit.¹¹⁴

Our baptism is a baptism into the crucified, and through the remission of sins we are created afresh by God in the new nature of Christ.¹¹⁵ "When we received the remission of sins, and put our hope on the Name, we became new, being created again from the beginning."¹¹⁶ We are saved by repentance, entering the water of baptism weighed down by sins, but emerge from baptism "bearing the fruit of fear in our hearts, and having hope in Jesus in the Spirit." God has given this repentance to us, and brought us from our bondage to death into the incorruptible temple.¹¹⁷

Eternal life through the Crucified. It is this same eternal life which Ignatius prays may be found in those to whom he writes: "Only let us be found in Christ Jesus unto true life."¹¹⁸ This eternal life has been won for men through Christ in His crucifixion. Through the passion of Christ we experience renewal of life, and are raised from death. Through His passion Christ calls those who are His members,¹¹⁹ and without Him we

¹¹⁴Ep. of Barn. 11.1-8. ¹¹⁵Cf. ibid. 6.11-12. ¹¹⁶Ibid. 16.8.

¹¹⁷Ibid. 11.11, 16.9. ¹¹⁸Eph. 11.1. ¹¹⁹Trall. 11.2.

have no true life.¹²⁰ For Ignatius, as for other writers of the second century who wrote in the context of martyrdom, the completion of the statement that we come to life through the passion of Christ is that we attain to God through our sufferings, our own passion which is the counterpart of His. Thus for the martyr the prayer is that he may be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ by being allowed to follow the example of the passion of Christ and attaining to God: "Suffer me to follow the example of the passion of my God . . . " ". . . if I may but attain to God through my sufferings" (ἐπιτρέφατέ μοι μιμητὴν εἶναι τοῦ πάθους τοῦ θεοῦ μου ἕάνπερ διὰ τοῦ παθεῖν θεοῦ ἐπιτύχω).¹²¹

We have now, however, reached the point at which we can discuss this characteristic teaching in Ignatius, Polycarp, and other early martyrs for the Gospel, viz. that in his death the sufferings of the martyr correspond to the sufferings of Christ, and are the means whereby he enters into fellowship with his suffering Saviour.

III. THE DEATH OF THE MARTYR AS THE IMITATION OF CHRIST'S PASSION

Martyrdom in the Early Church.

"These are the last times" - ἔσχατοι καιροί - declares the martyr, and as the end approaches, he himself carries about his chains and is

¹²⁰Trall. 9.2.

¹²¹Rom. 6.3, cf. 4.2; Poly. 7.1.

shortly about to endure his own martyrdom.¹²² From the inadequate sources that we have it is fairly clear that martyrdom in the early Church was never more than sporadic and short-lived.¹²³ Nor was the number of martyrs slain, so far as we have any evidence, of an exceptionally large size. Naturally, the martyrologies which survive from this period give us what is perhaps a one-sided picture of martyrdom as a daily and inescapable threat to the Christian Church, and the viciousness of their persecution, which still horrifies the reader, inevitably coloured later attempts to evaluate historically what actually had happened.

Granted, then, that in fact the total number of martyrs in relation to the widespread Christian communities¹²⁴ was small, the threat of martyrdom continually overshadowed the early Church, and much of the literature of this period can be intelligibly read only if we presuppose this background. Ignatius himself, we can assume, had been taken to Rome and put to death.¹²⁵ And when the anonymous writer of the Martyrdom of Polycarp describes the sufferings of the martyrs, we can surmise that the

¹²²Eph. 11. On the eschatology of the period cf. Hermas, Vis. 3.8. 9; Sim. 9.12.3; Ep. of Barn. 4.3, 6.13, II Clem. 14.2, 16.3, and see G. W. H. Lampe, "Early Patristic Eschatology" in Eschatology, Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Paper, No. 2 (Edinburgh: n.d.); Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, pp. 462-4.

¹²³Lebreton and Zeiller, The History of the Primitive Church, pp. 420-3; Lietzmann, The Founding of the Church Universal, p. 209, and cf. pp. 210-24.

¹²⁴Origen, Contra Celsum 1.26, calls the Christians οὐκ ὀλίγοι, and Tacitus, no doubt accurately, referred to them as multitudo ingens.

¹²⁵See Jerome, Chron. Olymp. 221.4.

prospect of a similar fate was by no means remote for the Christian communities of this period:

For some were torn by scourging until the mechanism of their flesh was seen even to the lower veins and arteries, and they endured so that even the bystanders pitied them and mourned And in the same way also those who were condemned to the beasts endured terrible torment, being stretched on sharp shells and buffeted with other kinds of various torments, that if it were possible the tyrant might bring them to a denial by continuous torture. For the devil used many wiles against them.¹²⁶

The testimony of the martyr was a simple one: Χριστιανός εἶμι .¹²⁷

Obedience to the civil authorities was accepted by the Church on the basis of Christ's own words and Paul's injunction to the Romans, but when any demand of the civil authorities put the Christian into the position of blaspheming the name of God, this demand was resisted even to death. Popular opinion held that the Christians were atheists and conspirers against the existing order, and when Polycarp, according to the Martyrdom, refused to "swear by the genius of Caesar," i.e. to say Κύριος Καίσαρ and thereby affirm his civic allegiance, his offence was proved.

The attitude of the Church to its martyrs is described in the Martyrdom:

For Him we worship (προσκυνούμεν) as the Son of God, but the martyrs we love (ἀγαπῶμεν) as disciples and imitators of the Lord; and rightly, because of their unsurpassable affection towards their own King and Teacher.¹²⁸

¹²⁶Mart. of Poly. 2.2,4. Cf. Eusebius H.E. 5.1.19,20; Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis, 6.4.

¹²⁷Mart. of Poly. 10.1; cf. J. A. Robinson, Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs, Texts and Studies No. I, PT. II, pp. 112-6.

¹²⁸Mart. of Poly. 17.3.

The martyr is the one who has authenticated his discipleship by following Christ into suffering and death, and this loyalty in the face of persecution inspired the conviction in the texts of this period that the crown of immortality is the immediate reward for those who have overcome through their endurance. The Scillitan martyrs were said to be "crowned with martyrdom."¹²⁹ Polycarp

overcame the unrighteous ruler, and thus gained the crown of immortality, and he is glorifying God and the Almighty Father, rejoicing with the Apostles and all the righteous, and he is blessing our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of our souls.¹³⁰

Hermas affirms that those who endure the persecution that is coming upon them are blessed, and exhorts them to remain steadfast "that your passing may be with the holy angels."¹³¹ We find an interesting parallel to this statement in the Martyrdom that Christ revealed to the suffering martyrs that they were "no longer men, but already angels."¹³² Lake comments, "This passage shows that the identification of the dead with angels existed in the second century in Christian circles."¹³³ It is, however, likelier that little more is suggested than that those who are faithful to death are at once taken from the arena of their execution to the heavenly city, to what I Clement calls "the glorious place which was his due."¹³⁴

¹²⁹See Mart. of Poly. 17.3. ¹³⁰Mart. of Poly. 19.2.

¹³¹Hermas, Vis. 2.2.7, cf. Sim. 9.25.2. ¹³²Mart. of Poly. 2.3.

¹³³K. Lake, The Apostolic Fathers, Vol. II, p. 315, n.1.

¹³⁴I Clem. 5.4, see also E. Stauffer, Die Theologie des Neuen Testaments, trans. as New Testament Theology by John Marsh (London: 1955), pp. 185-8.

Christ's passion the type of the martyr's death. What happened to the martyrs in their sufferings was seen in the early Church to be a repetition of what had happened to Christ in His passion, or alternatively, what happened to Christ in His passion was the beginning, type, or norm for those who are *σὺν Χριστῷ*.¹³⁵ The words of Jesus Christ unambiguously recalled to the Church this obligation to be *μυηταὶ Χριστοῦ* : "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."¹³⁶ If the disciple is to follow Christ in the kingdom he must drink Christ's cup and be baptised with His baptism. In this connexion E. Seeburg comments: "The thing that happened in Christ, that God Himself came in the flesh, that He died and rose again, is constantly repeated in the life of the Christian."¹³⁷ In the same connexion E. Stauffer says, "Christ's coming is not a pattern, but a principle in the strongest assertion of both meanings of that word: beginning and norm."¹³⁸ For the writers with whom we have been dealing in this chapter the Christian's "imitation" of Christ comes to its climax in martyrdom. Thus Polycarp writes to the Philippians: "Let us then be imitators of His endurance (*μυηταὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς αὐτοῦ*), and if we suffer for His name's sake let us glorify Him. For this is the example (*ὑπογραμμὸν*), which He gave us

¹³⁵E. Lohmeyer " *Σὺν Χριστῷ* " in *Festschrift f. A. Deissmann*, 1927.

¹³⁶Mark 8:34. ¹³⁷E. Seeburg, *Wer ist Christus*, 1937, p. 43.

¹³⁸Stauffer, *New Testament Theology*, p. 294, n. 495.

in Himself, and this is what we have believed."¹³⁹ The chains of the martyrs are their "diadems"¹⁴⁰ or "spiritual pearls"¹⁴¹ which mark them out as having been truly chosen by God and our Lord.

The "imitatio Christi." The attempt to trace the connexion between the sufferings of Christ, to whom the martyrs described by Eusebius yielded the title of "Martyr, the faithful and true witness," and the sufferings of the believer is made in precise and elaborate detail in the Martyrdom of Polycarp, and the idea of the literal conformity of Polycarp's death to the crucifixion of Christ is repeatedly found. Polycarp is the *μιμητής τοῦ Κυρίου* who "waited to be betrayed as also the Lord had done," and in his death the Lord has revealed "a martyrdom in accordance with the gospel" (*κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*).¹⁴² The death of the confessing martyr can be compared to the harvest of which Christ's own passion was the firstfruits; it is the conformity of the believer who is "united with Him by the like-

¹³⁹Poly. Phil. 8.2, cf. 9.1,2. The epistle stresses the idea of "endurance" (*ὑπομονή* used 32 times) and "enduring" (*ὑπομένειν* used 17 times). The point of the identification of the martyr with Christ is strengthened by the quotation from I Pet. 2:22-4 which immediately precedes this passage.

¹⁴⁰Mart. of Poly. 1.1. ¹⁴¹Eph. 11.2.

¹⁴²Mart. of Poly. 1.1. On the parallels between the death of Polycarp and the death of Christ see 1,5,6,7,8,9,10, and 12. Cf. also the parallels drawn between Christ's death and the Martyrdom of James the Just and Symeon in Eusebius, H.E. 2.23, 3.32 - the end which he achieved closely resembled the passion of the Lord, *τῷ τοῦ Κυρίου πάθει παραπλήσιον τὸ τέλος ἀπηνέγκαστο*; Augustine, Sermon 309, "Christus inter duos latrones ligno suspensus ad exemplum patientiae praebebatur; Cyprianus autem inter duos apparatus ad passionem curru portatus Christi vestigia sequebatur"; Irenaeus, A.h. 3.18.5, "conantes vestigia assequi passionis Domini," and *ibid.* 3.13.1, (of Stephen) "per omnia martyrii Magistrum imitans." See Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Vol. I, pp. 610-16.

ness of His death,¹⁴³ the ectype of which His own death was the prototype. The correspondence between the death of the martyr and the death of Christ is seen clearly in Eusebius's account of the martyrdom of Blandina:

Alike by the sight of her hanging in the form of a cross and by her earnest prayer she put heart in the combatants; for they saw during the contest even with the eyes of flesh in the person of their sister Him who was crucified for them, to assure those who believed on Him that every one who suffereth for the glory of Christ hath for ever fellowship with God.¹⁴⁴

Jesus Christ perfectly demonstrated the patient endurance which is required of the martyr, and this is why Ignatius is glad that his martyrdom is almost upon him: "The ends of the earth and the kingdoms of this world shall profit me nothing. It is better for me to die in Christ Jesus than to be king over the ends of the earth. I seek Him who died for our sake."¹⁴⁵ The joy of the martyr - "into which joy many desire to come" - is that by his death the Lord shows again the type of His own martyrdom.

Discipleship as martyrdom. Closely connected in Ignatius with the idea of the imitation of Christ is that of discipleship. When he says, "I am not a disciple yet"¹⁴⁶ he means that he has not yet been "an imitator of the passion of my God" (μιμητὴς τοῦ πάθους τοῦ θεοῦ μου).¹⁴⁷ Undoubtedly the close connexion between discipleship and martyrdom in Ignatius refers back to the word of the Lord: "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."¹⁴⁸ For the disciple life

¹⁴³Rom. 6:5. ¹⁴⁴Eusebius, H.E. 5.1.41. ¹⁴⁵Rom. 6.1.

¹⁴⁶Trall. 5.2. ¹⁴⁷Rom. 6.3. ¹⁴⁸Luke 14:27.

with Christ involves suffering: "For this reason also we suffer, that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ our only teacher."¹⁴⁹ It is true that Ignatius talks of "discipleship" and "imitation" in other terms, as, for example, when he counsels the Philadelphians, "Do nothing without the bishop, keep your flesh as the temple of God, love unity, flee from divisions, be imitators of Jesus Christ, as was He also of His Father."¹⁵⁰ But typically he defines the "imitation" of Christ or the "discipleship" of the believer in terms of following Christ in His sufferings and death. When, therefore, he claims that he is "beginning to be a disciple,"¹⁵¹ he means that he seeks the One who died for his sake, and that only when he comes to his death will he have attained his desire to belong to God: "I shall become a man," (ἄνθρωπος ἔσομαι).¹⁵²

Union with God through martyrdom. The death of the martyr is his means of attaining to union with God. Throughout Ignatius the phrase θεοῦ ἐπιτυχεῖν has this technical sense of attaining to God especially through suffering. Indeed the accumulation of references appears at times to suggest that for Ignatius suffering was not merely the means but actually the condition of attaining to union with God: "Let there come on me fire, and cross, and struggles with wild beasts, cutting and tearing asunder, racking of bones, mangling of limbs, crushing of my whole body, cruel tortures of

¹⁴⁹Magn. 9.1, cf. Rom. 5.3. ¹⁵⁰Phil. 7.2.

¹⁵¹Rom. 5.3, cf. Eph. 3.1. ¹⁵²Rom. 6.

the devil, may I but attain to Jesus Christ!"¹⁵³ "Suffer me to be eaten by the beasts, through whom I can attain to God."¹⁵⁴ "If I suffer I shall be Jesus Christ's freedman, and in Him I shall rise up free."¹⁵⁵ "Why have I given myself up to death, to fire, to the sword, to wild beasts? Because near the sword is near to God, with the wild beasts is with God."¹⁵⁶ And yet, despite the strong emphasis on attaining to God through suffering, Ignatius does not go so far as to claim that suffering is the only way to God. It is, however, the means par excellence by which the believer becomes a partaker of Christ (*κοινωνός Χριστοῦ*),¹⁵⁷ and martyrdom for this reason was held to be the conflict by which the "noble athletes," i.e. the martyrs, received the crown of immortality.¹⁵⁸ Eusebius, for example, records that as the fire approached the martyr Carpus, he prayed, and said, "Blessed art thou, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, because thou didst deem me also the sinner worthy of this part in thee."¹⁵⁹ In her martyrdom Blandina is said to have had "communion with Christ."¹⁶⁰

The presence of Christ with the martyr. The confidence of the martyrs was that at the hour of their torture Christ was present with them.¹⁶¹ We have heard how simply Ignatius expressed this conviction: "Near the

¹⁵³Rom. 5.3. ¹⁵⁴Rom. 4.1. ¹⁵⁵Rom. 4.3. ¹⁵⁶Smyr. 4.2.

¹⁵⁷Mart. of Poly. 6.2. ¹⁵⁸Eusebius, H.E. 5.1.36.

¹⁵⁹Eusebius, H.E. 4.15.48. ¹⁶⁰Ibid. 5.1.56.

¹⁶¹Mart. of Poly. 2.2, cf. Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis, 4, Acta Pauli et Theclae, 24.

sword is near to God, with the wild beasts is with God." But in the martyr Church where death by the sword or in the arenas of Rome was not just a remote chance but a present threat this was the substance of the hope which the Christians had in their Saviour. Writing of one of the martyrs of Vienna and Lyons (A.D. 177) Eusebius states:

When they had nothing more that they could do to him at the last they applied red-hot brazen plates to the most tender parts of his body. And these indeed were burned, but he confessed himself unbent and unyielding, stout in his confession, bedewed and strengthened by the heavenly fountain of the water of life issuing from the belly of Christ.¹⁶²

Granting that the exploits of the early martyrs may have been adorned in the telling at a later age, the courage and faith of the persecuted Church is still a remarkable and brilliant testimony to the endurance of those who knew that to them it had been granted not only to believe but also to suffer for the sake of Christ.

Attainment of life through martyrdom. The attainment to God through martyrdom is also the attainment of the new and perfect life which Christ has procured for us through His own death. Thus when Ignatius claims $\alpha\upsilon\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma \epsilon\iota\sigma\omicron\upsilon\alpha\iota$,¹⁶³ his words are to be understood in a soteriological sense, and not just to mean that he will exhibit heroic valour. He writes, therefore, to the Romans desiring death because, he says, "my lust has been crucified" ($\delta \epsilon\mu\omicron\varsigma \epsilon\rho\omega\varsigma \epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\omega\tau\alpha\iota$), "and there is in me no fire of love for material things."¹⁶⁴ Origen has misunderstood Ignatius at this point

¹⁶²Eusebius, H.E. 5.1.2. ¹⁶³Rom. 6.2. ¹⁶⁴Rom. 7.2.

to mean that Christ, his Eros, has been crucified,¹⁶⁵ but Ignatius simply means that his "desire for the delights of this life" has been rooted out of him, and his only desire now is for "the 'bread of God,' which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, who was 'of the seed of David,' and . . . His blood, which is incorruptible love."¹⁶⁶

Ignatius was not afflicted with such a "martyr complex" that he deliberately sought sufferings, and there is no evidence in his epistles that he was psychologically obsessed with the idea of seeking crucifixion in order to attain to Christ. When, however, he appeals to be allowed to follow the example of Christ, he does so because martyrdom is the lot or portion (κληρος), which is appointed to him and the means by which he is crowned with immortality.¹⁶⁷

And paying heed to the grace of Christ they despised worldly tortures, by a single hour purchasing everlasting life. And the fire of their cruel torturers had no heat for them, for they set before their eyes an escape from the fire which is everlasting and is never quenched, and with the eyes of their heart they looked up to the good things which are preserved for those who have endured.¹⁶⁸

In this faith, centred upon the person of Jesus Christ crucified, the martyr Church fulfilled its appointed lot and entered into fellowship with Christ.

¹⁶⁵Commentary on the Song of Songs, Prologue.

¹⁶⁶See A. Nygren, Agape and Eros, (Philadelphia: 1953), p. 390, and on martyrdom as the "birthday" of the sufferer see A. C. Rush, Death and Burial in Christian Antiquity (Washington: 1941), ch. 4.

¹⁶⁷Trall. 12.3; cf. Mart. of Poly. 17.1. ¹⁶⁸Mart. of Poly. 2.3.

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